

Tsuyoshi Fujitaka

藤孝剛志

Illustration

成瀬ちさと

Chisato Naruse

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即死チートが
最強すぎて
異世界のやつらがまるで
相手にならない
んですが。

Instant Death

The other world doesn't stand a chance against the
power of instant death

- Volume 1 -

**-Author-
Tsuyoshi Fujitaka**

**-Artist-
Chisato Naruse**

[Saku | Sad Hoovy's Inhuman Translations]

– SYNOPSIS –

Growth cheats? Infinite magic power? The ability to utilize all archetypes? What's the point if instant death ends everything with a single attack?

High school senior Yogiri Takatou was on a school field trip when he woke up to a dragon assaulting his sightseeing bus, with the only ones still on the bus being him and his female classmate, the panicking Tomochika Dannoura. Apparently the rest of his classmates had been given special powers by Sion, a woman who introduced herself as Sage, and escaped from the dragon, leaving those that hadn't received any special powers behind as dragon bait.

And so Yogiri was thrown into a parallel universe full of danger, with no idea of what just happened. Likewise, Sion had no way of knowing just what kind of being she had summoned to her world.

【 ACT 1 】

CHAPTER 1

DIE

"Come on! Wake up already, hey!"

Yogiri Takatou woke up to being shouted at.

Eyes droopy from just waking up he stared at the girl that was shaking his shoulders. She was wearing a school uniform, much like him.

"Who were you again?"

Yogiri was confused. Before he had fallen asleep, the seat next to him, the one in the far back of the field trip's sightseeing bus, belonged to a boy, not a girl.

"Tomochika Dannoura!"

Tomochika's yelling sounded desperate. Yogiri remembered that she was one of his classmates, but other than her name he hardly knew anything about her.

"Are we there already?"

He asked while rubbing his eyes, recalling that they were headed to a ski resort in Nagano. It was strange for Tomochika, who could barely be called an acquaintance, to come wake him, but the time did feel about right for arrival.

"No! Forget about that! What should we do!?"

"Sorry, what?"

"How did you even sleep until now!? There was so much chaos!"

Yogiri absentmindedly looked towards the front of the bus, seeking the source of Tomochika's panic.

His field of vision felt distorted.

It wasn't his tired eyes playing tricks on him, the bus' frame had been crushed. Furthermore, a white something pierced through the wall of the bus, impaling a boy from his class.

"Yeah, I can see how that would cause chaos."

Yogiri, now understanding the reason behind Tomochika's panic, continued to inspect the bus from his seat.

It was dented all over the place and the ceiling and walls were full of holes. On the floor there was a collapsed girl, covered in blood. Based on the gaping hole in her chest she was most likely dead.

Given the emptiness of the bus the majority of students must have already escaped. Other than Yogiri and Tomochika the only potential survivor seemed to be their impaled classmate, but he didn't look like he'd last much longer.

What impaled him looked like a white spear that had sprouted thorns. However, it was no lifeless weapon; it squirmed.

With barely noticeable trembling it stretched and contracted--most likely part of some living creature, but Yogiri wasn't familiar with an animal that possessed such a long, unpleasant looking organ.

"What even is that?"

"Don't ask me, like I'd know!"

Tomochika lost it.

Yogiri looked out of the window and saw a huge something with scaled skin clinging to the bus.

"Looks like a snake. Oh, maybe a lizard?"

Either way it was creepy.

Yogiri picked up a karaoke mic that had rolled up to his feet and threw it at the white something.

GIAAAaAAaAaaAAA

The mic hit the organ dead on and the creature let out an eardrum bursting scream. The part that had been shoved into the bus quickly retracted and the impaled boy dropped to the floor. The huge monster hastily took some distance, finally allowing Yogiri get a good look of it.

"So it was a wyvern, I see."

A two-legged winged monster that was huge even among dragons.

The organ from earlier was wriggling near the wyvern's crotch, most likely its reproductive organ. They appeared to have been attacked by a dragon in heat, and as if that wasn't already difficult enough to believe, the scenery from outside the window further surprised Yogiri.

A grass plain stretched out before him.

"I'm pretty sure when I last looked out the window it was a snowy road at night though."

"Who cares about that right now! Why'd you have to make it angry!"

Tomochika, driven by panic, grabbed Yogiri at his collar and shook him.

In his shaky field of vision he noticed the dragon's glare and flames leaking from its mouth like manifested rage.

"Ah!"

His eyes still on the dragon Yogiri let out a voice of realization.

"What? Did you figure something out that'll save us!?"

Tomochika stared at him with expectation sparkling in her eyes.

"Huh? Oh, no. I was just thinking 'So this is what dragons having sex with cars was

about."

"What are you even talking about!?"

Dragons having sex with cars was one of many peculiar modern crazes, but before Yogiri could begin his explanation he was interrupted.

ROoOo000

The dragon roared and set its massive wings into motion, raising its ridiculously large body into the air and after gaining some height it nosedived back down towards them. Yogiri voiced his thoughts.

"Now it's looking grim."

The bus' inside was slanted, the aisle was narrow and on top of that there were corpses lying around. Escaping it in time seemed impossible.

Well, no helping it.

The plunging dragon seemed a fitting metaphor for life's fall of the curtain, Yogiri thought. He had never been particularly attached to life.

"We're finished!"

Tomochika cried out desperately as she clung to Yogiri, who had already given up. Her fairly voluminous chest changed shape as it pushed into Yogiri.

You couldn't call it uncomfortable.

He might be unsociable, but Yogiri was still a man. He had to admit, he somewhat felt a duty to protect Tomochika now that it had come to this.

And thus, Yogiri changed his mind about never using his ability.

"Die."

He determined his target and released his power.

Its wings stopped immediately.

The loss of balance made the dragon's massive body spin and gain momentum while it fell from the sky until it finally crashed into the plain. Earth and grass flew through the air as it slid across the ground.

Bump!

The bus shook from the dragon's collision with it.

Fortunately, the friction from plowing through the earth like that had taken away a good amount of its momentum. Yogiri didn't feel much of an impact.

"Now how should we go from here."

They had escaped danger for the time being, but the situation was still beyond Yogiri's understanding.

"Dannoura-san. Looks like we're saved."

"...Really?"

She continued to cling onto him for a little while longer, but after realizing that things had quieted down she hesitantly lifted her head and separated from Yogiri.

"Huh? But why? What just happened?"

Tomochika looked out of the window with a vacant gaze.

"That's what I'd like to ask, but let's stop panicking first, okay? Rest a little and we'll talk after that."

Before discussing what to do next there was a need to get a grasp on the situation. Tomochika's cooperation was necessary for that, but because of how visibly distraught she was Yogiri decided to wait for her to calm down first.

He took his handheld console out of his bag and booted it up. It was a popular hunting game that he had started playing just recently.

"Does this seem like the time to play Monster Hu○○er to you!"

Tomochika was being surprisingly rational.

CHAPTER 2

MY POWER LEVEL IS 530,000

"Hey. Shouldn't we hurry outside already?"

"And from there? We don't even know if it's safe."

"I appreciate your reasonable words and all, but would you mind not playing Mo○○ter Hunter while saying them?"

Yogiri was still sitting in the back row of the sightseeing bus, playing video games while waiting for Tomochika to calm down.

"Say, I've been watching since earlier, but aren't you a little too bad at that?"

"I don't know either, it's weird. What's with this delay after three hits? I don't remember being this bad at it."

"That's the adept style, right? How about switching to striker? That doesn't have a delay after the three hit combo."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously."

Yogiri switched styles as he was told and indeed, now the weapon handling was much closer to that of the prequels.

"Whoah, nice!"

"Also, you're being way too reckless for a lancer. When playing lance you stop after two attacks when it looks like you've got time for three, and after one attack when it looks like you've got time for two, always move in a way that lets you transition into either

guarding or evading... actually, isn't this the totally wrong time for this?"

"It's like you're the goddess of lances or something."

"Pretty sure that much is common knowledge..."

Nonetheless, Tomochika was flattered.

"...Calmed down?"

"I guess. The fact that people died is still on my mind, but maybe I'm numb from the shock. The smell has become bearable as well."

Yogiri judged that she had calmed down enough. He put his console on sleep and turned to her.

"Alright, can you tell me about what happened up until now?"

"Not like I know you that well, but you sure are the type to stick to his own pace, huh... The events so far then, right? Well, it seems we were transported to a different world, and there are these sages, and everyone became a sage candidate, and Yazaki-kun started taking control of things and-"

"Wait, what? Can you start at the beginning?"

"Ah, okay."

Tomochika told Yogiri about everything that had transpired so far.



After passing through the tunnel they were in a field.

"Hueh?"

Tomochika's absentminded gazing out of the window was interrupted by an idiotic sounding voice. It was her own.

She was certain it had been night just a few moments ago, yet all of a sudden she and her classmates had found themselves in broad daylight. The snowy mountain scenery disappeared as well, making place for a grass-covered plain.

A moment later the rest of the students took notice of the absurd change in location and soon the whole bus was in uproar.

"Mikochi, any idea where we are?"

Tomochika turned to the girl in the seat next to her, Romiko Jougasaki.

"A grass plain, I guess?"

"I meant, you know, on a larger scale..."

Panic made its way through the confused students and the bus came to a full stop.

A woman in a white dress got on.

'A pitiful person with a thing for cosplaying as a magical girl,' was Tomochika's first impression of the new passenger.

"Greetings, sage candidates. My name is Sion, Grandchild of the Great Sage."

Even Tomochika with her tendency for comic relief one-liners was too bewildered to voice a single word. However, that may have been for the best. One uninvited interruption and things could have ended badly, as her homeroom teacher demonstrated.

"Who do you think you are! Are you responsible for——"

It would have been a good line, full of vigor, but he didn't get to finish it. Sion casually grasped his head and...

pop

With a hushed noise the teacher's cranium cracked, then burst, splattering the front row seats with blood and gray matter.

"No interruptions, please. The conduct I recommend all of you take is shaking from fear with clattering teeth. Don't act out of line, pay attention."

The bus fell into silence; the students had immediately grasped the danger Sion posed.

"I don't intend to cause direct harm to any sage candidates, but that only goes for as long as you don't get on my nerves. Make sure to take care in that regard, okay? My power level is 530,000."

(TN: A Dragon Ball Z reference.)

No one moved a muscle. Tomochika didn't throw in a quip.

"Aw, you could've laughed there."

Sion spoke as she moved her left hand towards the driver's seat.

Light gathered in her palm and in the next moment the bus driver, along with his whole seat, burned to nothing.

"See? I got irritated because my joke fell flat and here I went killing again."

Confronted with Sion's disregard for life the kids curled up even more.

"This may look terribly unreasonable to you all, but that's just how the world is. Can never know what the future brings. Well then, I'll be allowing myself to explain the current situation. You might have already noticed, but as far as you are concerned this place is a parallel universe. And I am the one that summoned you."

There was no way they could accept an explanation like being transported to a parallel universe just like that, but despite their disbelief they remained silent, doing as Sion had told them and staying in line.

"The purpose behind your summoning was to have you all take the roles of sage candidates. Sages are the ones managing this world, but a decrease in number every now and then raises a need for the occasional replenishment."

Sion pointed her right hand towards the students and the bus filled with glaring light; Tomochika was prepared for death.

But nothing happened.

Ever so timidly she opened her eyes and saw that Romiko next to her was glowing in a blue light. The classmates on the other side of the aisle were red and yellow.

She stood up to take a look through the bus and saw that everyone was shining in various colors.

—Huh? What's going on? Um, I'm not glowing, hello?

Was it a good sign, or a bad sign?

Tomochika did feel some unease about the idea of undergoing the same phenomenon, but she couldn't help feel like being left behind.

CHAPTER 3

EVERYONE, PLEASE LISTEN!

All the students' glowing and beaming made it feel like a rainbow was running through the bus, giving it the air of a modern day fairy-tale.

"Your powers differ based on color, but for convenience just think of it as the more vivid the glow the stronger the power. Everyone's light will fade in a moment, I recommend you take mental note of who looks powerful before that happens. Getting on the good side of strong companions continues to prove a solid method of survival."

Taking Sion's advice to heart the students began frantically scanning their classmates for promising individuals.

Tomochika wasn't the only one that wasn't sparkling, but they were a drastic minority.

"Version 02.87.05.11 of Battle Song has just been installed in you all. With the install successful you should be seeing all the license holders' logos right about now. Vexing, I know, but they're only there during boot-up so please bear with it as it finishes setting up."

Tomochika, who had still been standing, sat down again and stared forward. All she could see was the bus seat in front of her.

Whatever Sion was talking about, she couldn't see it.

"Mikochi, are you seeing anything?"

With a rising sense of unease Tomochika asked Romiko in the neighboring seat.

"Yeah. A bunch of colorful text is floating around, not sure what's going on. 'Status,' it says. Oh, it's in our language. That's strange, right?"

So it really was visible to everyone else.

Tomochika was wavering, it seemed to have been a bad sign after all. The feeling of

being left out just wouldn't leave her alone.

"With this you will gain the ability to use various special powers. Use them and work towards becoming a sage. You have one month."

"E-excuse me!"

Tomochika bundled her resolve, rose to her feet and directly addressed Sion.

"Yes?"

"Ah, is it fine to ask questions?"

"Sure, go ahead."

Sion smiled gently.

"Um, I didn't glow earlier, and I'm not seeing any logos or anything either..."

"My oh my."

Sion's gentle smile quickly turned into one of theatrical pity.

"It's regretful, but occasionally there are incompatible individuals. Nothing to do about that, you'd best give up."

Being told off just like that Tomochika was puzzled for a response. The premonition telling her she was heading towards a hopeless situation was growing more and more intense.

"Moving on. You are all part of the same clan, a community of sorts. From here, please produce a sage from within that clan. You may work together on turning only one of you into a sage, or even split up and become sages by yourselves, on your own. I'll leave your course of action to you."

"One more question! Why us, if I may ask!"

Tomochika's despair gave birth to belligerency.

In response to her question she was stabbed with stares, the same message in all of their eyes: "Don't act out of line!"

"Oh, just a matter of statistics. Calculations suggested that this group has a high probability of producing a sage."

"One more! Please tell me what happens if none of us turn into sages, if I may ask!"

"Hm, what indeed. I suppose I'll have you turned into livestock and wrung of your magical power. You will be shoved and locked into a dark magic tank where you will spend the entirety of your life. Work hard, okay?"

It was a future more miserable than what Tomochika could have imagined.

That was her last question.

"On the other hand, if you do produce a sage the rest of you will turn into that sage's acolytes, a position of quite some influence in this world. Now then, your first mission will begin in an hour. Don't go and die off on me now."

With those words Sion left the bus. The students she had left behind now released their pent-up hysteria and the bus' inside became chaotic.

"What the heck, I don't get what's going on at all."

Tomochika slumped into her seat.

"Ah-, the mission's description came in."

Romiko spoke in her usual manner, not seeming particularly perturbed. According to Romiko, the mission's contents were as follows:

First Mission

Objective: Escape from the Plain of Dragons and reach the city in the north!

Main Enemies: Dragons (Average Level of 1000)

Advice: Dragons' preferred food are humans. As such, being attacked upon leaving the bus is close to certain. Furthermore, defeating a dragon is beyond your current abilities. You have one hour until the mission starts, during that time a barrier around the bus will guarantee your safety. Use that time to come up with a strategy.

"No way, dragons?"

Tomochika looked out of the window.

All she could see was an idyllic plain of grass, it was difficult to imagine a monster like a dragon to suddenly appear. However, what she did spot were castle walls, far off in the distance.

Seemed like the town was over there.

"Everyone, please listen!"

The panic was still ongoing when suddenly someone raised their voice and stepped forward.

A male student, Suguru Yazaki.

After his shout everyone turned quiet.

"We're in a confusing situation, but for the time being it doesn't look like we've got a choice but to clear that mission, and for that we'll need everyone's cooperation."

A sudden leader-act.

Tomochika expected someone to voice an objection, but, surprisingly, everyone appeared to go along with it.

"Hey, is it really fine to leave it to Yazaki-kun like that?"

She asked Romiko in a hushed voice.

"Well, having someone take the role of mediator sounds reasonable, I guess?"

"I mean, yeah, but..."

There was something about it that gave her a bad feeling.

"First of all I would like to get a grasp on everyone's abilities. Can everyone write down their name and status on a memo and bring it to me?"

Somehow no one opposed Yazaki's proposal.

CHAPTER 4

A SKILL THAT MAKES YOU POPULAR!

With Suguru Yazaki as the leading figure an escape strategy was being developed at the front end of the bus.

Tomochika, along with the others that had no light, were driven to the back of the bus and completely shut out from the discussion.

Altogether there were four students that hadn't glowed, but Tomochika wasn't very familiar with the other three.

Ayaka Shinozaki. An arrogant girl that wore the fact that she was rich on her nose, making her friendless in the class.

Yuuichirou Kiryuu. A so-called delinquent, his rude behavior causing people to keep a distance.

Yogiri Takatou. Spending most of his school time sleeping there weren't many relations with his classmates to speak of.

"This guy seriously asleep?"

Kiryuu found it hard to believe, but Yogiri had been in the back row this whole time, sleeping through the earlier uproar and continuing to do so.

"Ah, right, Takatou-kun's always asleep, isn't he?"

"Who cares about that right now! Why did I end up in this situation!?"

Tomochika had barely finished her sentence when Ayaka vented her agitation on her.

"I'm not really the one to ask..."

Tomochika looked towards the front of the bus.

The discussion seemed to be advancing steadily, although it was less like a discussion and more like everyone listening to what Yazaki had to say.

A short while later their classmates started getting off the bus. One hour was close to passing and the students were about ready to start their mission.

"Tch. Not even a word to us. Come on, let's go."

Yuuichirou prompted the other powerless individuals to come along.

"Takatou-kun, everyone's going to leave you behind at this rate. Come on, wake up, hey."

The sound of Ayaka's leaving footsteps was a clear 'leave him, who cares.' Tomochika did feel some guilt, but she didn't want to be rude and shake him awake either, so she started making her way to the front as well.

However, Suguru Yazaki and Asuha Gunzan blocked the exit.

"What do you think you're doing?"

Kiryuu's anger could be heard in his words.

"Apologies, but we can't take you guys along. You'll be staying here."

He didn't appear very apologetic at all, but so he spoke.

"The hell? This guy, thinking he can settle things like he wants just because we weren't part of the discussion! Who do you think you are!?"

"The General."

Yazaki grabbed the hand rail mounted to the wall next to the bus' entrance and casually pulled on it, making what should have been metal bend its shape like rubber.

"This is the power of the General. Even at level 1, that's how much the System strengthens one's body after having received its favor. Taking along regular humans

like you would only drag us down, do me a favor and understand."

Kiryuu's body turned stiff after witnessing Yazaki's inhuman strength.

"But, but if you're that powerful you should be able to handle protecting us, right?"

Ayaka pleaded as if she was trying to hang on to him.

"And where is the benefit in that? We need to become sages whatever it takes, we can't afford looking after you."

"Fine, so don't look after us or protect us, but can't you at least let us tag along?"

Tomochika chimed in. If they were to be left behind now they would almost certainly die.

"That won't do either. Having you all stay here is part of our plan."

"Okaaay, anyway, time to make all of you a little more attractive. Charm Up!"

Asuha made a move before they could ask what Yazaki meant by plan, raising her arm and making her palm face Tomochika.

Whatever she did, it made Tomochika begin to emit light.

"Huh, what? Asu, what'd you do?"

The light faded without leaving any visible change behind, but surely making her glow for a moment wasn't all there was to it.

"It's her class, Beauty Coordinator. Her class focuses on buffs and while going over everyone's abilities we noticed that she should be able to control monster aggro. Basically, we decided that you guys will be the bait."

"Bait?"

Tomochika needed a moment to grasp what he was saying.

"Tomochi~, you see, 「Charm Up」 is a skill that makes you popular!"

"I've had someone with an enemy detection skill scan the area and apparently there's only one dragon in the sky above us right now. Meaning, as long as it's targeting you guys we can safely reach we city."

"And you're trying to tell me everyone agreed to a plan like that!? Ah, Mikochi wouldn't! No way Mikochi would go along with this!"

"Mikochi? Ahh, you mean Jougasaki. Naturally, she agreed."

"But hey, it's not like we're telling you to die, okay? We just need you to attract the dragon for a while."

Asuha got off the bus with a casual laugh, appearing as though she was telling those words to herself rather than them. Yazaki followed her after shutting the door by force.

Kiryuu rushed to the door in a panic.

"Damn it, it's not opening! He's wrecked it with that ridiculous strength!"

"What should we do?"

"Like I'd know! Why is this happening !? Why did I get caught up in something like this!"

VRAAAaAAAaaAAAAAA

As the three classmates were panicking an air shaking scream ran through the bus.

"Was that... the dragon?"

It hadn't shown itself yet, but Tomochika understood immediately. That was the roar of a being of absolute power.

"The window! Let's get out through that!"

Tomochika heard Kiryuu's idea and took a look herself.

However, the windows were fixed to the frame.

She could see her classmates running away from the bus as quickly as they could, their hurry speaking volumes of the imminent danger.

— I need to do something!

Tomochika struck the pane in an attempt to break it open, but it had no effect.

"Aa-!"

The bus suddenly shook with enough force to nearly tip over and Tomochika was thrown through the air.

"Is everyone safe!?"

She landed flat on the floor, but quickly got back on her feet.

"AAHHhh!"

Kiryuu, who had been hurled towards the exit, screamed for his life while staring at his blood-covered classmate that laid on the ground between him and Tomochika.

Something sharp had pierced the bus through the ceiling and impaled Ayaka Shinozaki's torso.



"Yeah, so Ayaka got attacked first, and when I ran to the back of the bus here to get away from that thing I saw a certain somebody still sleeping like a log."

Tomochika appeared to find Yogiri's sleeping habits disagreeable.

"A parallel universe, huh... Ah! How am I going to recharge my console..."

"That's the first thing you worry about after hearing that story!?"

It was no laughing matter for Yogiri.

CHAPTER 5

WAS THAT A FLYING SAUCER?

"Putting the battery problem on hold, I didn't glow so I was left behind as well, huh."

"Well, do you see anything strange in your field of vision?"

"Like those logos and missions you mentioned earlier? Not that I can tell."

Yogiri focused carefully, but he couldn't see anything different from usual.

"Yeah, then it's really only for the ones that glowed. Apparently they can see some kind of stamina bar constantly floating in the corner of their eyes.

"Like the ones in Monst○r H○nter?"

"I guess. Mikochi isn't into games so she couldn't explain it very well."

"Is that Mikochi one of your friends? Did she just go and abandon you with everyone else?"

Yogiri wasn't surprised his classmates left him behind given that he had barely interacted with them, but in Tomochika's case it should have been different.

He may not be familiar with the various cliques in his class, but she appeared like someone with a lot of friends to him.

"Yazaki must have done something,... I think."

Tomochika's expression betrayed her distress. She didn't want to believe her friends would sacrifice her and said:

"If a Beauty Coordinator can manipulate people's attraction, then a General being able to manipulate people's morals makes sense, right? But really, this classes story and

their levels and skills make this whole thing seem like some game, don't they."

Yogiri liked the idea of such a power, just a little.

"If this General Yazaki guy said the truth and there really was just one dragon then we might be good to go outside now,"

Yogiri said as he looked out through the window, at the collapsed dragon.

Without even a single muscle twitching its appearance had lost all of its earlier menace.

"Hey, um... Takatou-kun, did you do that?"

There was some apprehension in Tomochika's question.

"Nope, it randomly killed itself with a crash landing."

"That sounds like such an obvious lie!"

"You don't have to believe me."

"Well,... not like I'd know how you would have gone about it in the first place, but 'randomly killed itself'?"

Yogiri didn't particularly plan on keeping his power a secret, but he didn't feel like explaining it right now either so he put it off for later.

"Anyway, given the presence of dragons the possibility of this really being a parallel universe... might be there."

"Is there the possibility it isn't one!?"

"How about a crazy rich guy abducting kids and having them perform in his snuff movies? I'd probably also believe a Jurassic Ark-esque Dragon Park story before transportation to a different world."

"That's just because you weren't there for that 'Grandchild of the Great Sage' person, that was definitely magic! She fired a beam or something from her hand!"

Even if she told him about Sion's magic, it wasn't like Yogiri had a way of knowing whether she said, or saw, the truth.

But being stubborn wasn't going to help either so he decided to go with Tomochika's explanation of their situation--if it proved wrong they could always change their perspective later.

"Anyway, we're not going to achieve anything by staying here so let's head outside."

Yogiri stepped over the corpses and went towards the exit. Tomochika had said something about it being shut close, but, probably due to the dragon's rampaging, it now seemed loose enough to break open.

"Yeah, we should be able to get out here. Hm? What's wrong?"

He was thought Tomochika was right behind him, but there was no reply. When he turned around he saw that she was still standing in front of Kiryuu's body.

"I know there's nothing to do about their deaths, but still, just stepping over them and leaving doesn't seem right..."

"Oh, I guess."

Yogiri hadn't thought of their bodies as much more than obstacles, but he did understand where Tomochika was coming from.

He went back to her and lifted his late classmates into their seats.

Having done that, him and Tomochika made their way to the door and after giving it a good kick it flipped over with a flashy crash.

Due to the loud noise just now there didn't seem to be any point in trying to be sneaky anymore, so Yogiri got off the bus without paying much heed.

"Looks like spring here."

A gentle breeze blew over the grass.

"Yeah, see? I told you it's a parallel universe. You know, because it's winter at home right now."

"That doesn't mean much, we might just be in the southern hemisphere. Instead of a parallel universe wouldn't you sooner believe that we were transported to some different country by ship, bus and all?"

"Were you always this stubborn!?"

"Believing someone when they tell you about transportation to a different dimensions seems stranger if you ask me."

"Fine, if you want proof that badly... Aha!"

Tomochika looked around them and seemed to have found something. Yogiri followed her gaze.

A disk was floating through the sky.

The lack of comparable objects made it difficult to gauge the distance, but several kilometers ahead of them there was a flying disk with a sort of dome on its top.

It rose higher as they were watching it and after following its ascent for a while Yogiri was taken aback.

In the direction it was heading there was a huge number of floating masses of rock, their altitude high enough for parts of them to be covered by clouds.

The disk continued to float towards the rocks until it eventually disappeared from view.

"See! Isn't that enough to call this a different world!? That's totally one of those sky castles! We're looking at the bottom of a floating continent!"

Tomochika got really into it.

"Was that a flying saucer?"

"Why are you worried about the UFO's shape!? Acknowledge it! I told you we were in a different world!"

"I get it, fine. Let's go with the parallel universe theory for now."

The foreign country theory had holes anyway. Yogiri decided to adopt the different dimension theory for the time being.

"Actually, what's the deal with using UFOs anyway!? They should come up with something more fantasylike!"

"Good to see you in such a lively mood."

Yogiri took a look around their surroundings as he replied to Tomochika, but there wasn't much to see other than grass.

In the distance he could see city walls. That must have been the first mission's point of objective, and therefore North.

To their west there was a forest, just a short walk away. They couldn't see far towards East or West because of the plains sloping into a hill in that direction.

"Looks like we can pick between a city, a forest and hills. Although let's forget about that forest."

Yogiri wanted to avoid living in forests if possible.

Him and Tomochika were used to life in a city, something like a wild forest was unknown territory for them. Furthermore, who knows what might lurk in a different world's forests.

Tomochika chimed in.

"The city sounds good if it actually has people there, but..."

But that's where the classmates that turned them into dragon bait had gone, which

Tomochika had conflicted feelings about. Yogiri changed the topic.

"Well, let's try rummaging through the luggage before going anywhere. Everyone else left in a hurry, right?"

"Ah, yeah, they weren't really carrying anything with them."

"We might even find a charger."

"What's up with your enthusiasm towards that game..."

Yogiri went to the trunk room at the bottom of the bus, hoping to get to all the luggage inside it, but soon realized that it was locked.

"Doesn't look like we can break it open. Dannoura-san, do you know how to pick locks?"

"Why do I feel like you genuinely thought I had experience in crime related skills like that?"

"No can do then. I don't remember any larger baggage lying around in the bus itself either. Alright, let's see what's behind those hills."

There might have been something more favorable than the northern city there.

Yogiri was about to head over there, but he stopped after seeing that Tomochika was pointing towards the sky in the North.

"Hey, isn't something coming flying?"

"Another dragon?"

Or maybe one of those UFOs. Yogiri looked towards where Tomochika was pointing, but he could only tell that something was floating in the sky, not what exactly it was. It didn't look like a dragon at least.

"That's Higashida-kun, Fukuhara-kun and Hanakawa-kun, but how are they flying through the sky!?"

"Oh, well done noticing from this distance."

Yogiri agreed with her assessment out of admiration, but since he barely knew his classmates' names it wasn't like he could tell whether she was actually right.

CHAPTER 6

AND MY BODY FALLS INTO THAT CATEGORY!?

"Well, let's kill them."

When Yogiri found out that what was flying towards them were his classmates he promptly made up his mind.

"Ah, yes. Who wouldn't choose murder when finding out about their flying classmates... —What the heck are you talking about!?"

Tomochika pulled a noritsukkomi, seemingly in disagreement with Yogiri's proposal.

"Then what? Are you planning to have a nice talk with them and make up again after they left us out here to die?"

"Huh? Wait, you were serious about killing them?"

She thought he was joking, but after realizing he meant what he said she was in dismay.

"Leaving us behind out here is basically the same as killing us. The whole class shares that guilt, they can't really complain if we pay them back, can they?"

It wasn't like Yogiri held some kind of resentment, he just felt he had a right for revenge.

"I can't really agree with you there, even if you weren't talking about killing them..."

"Well, I don't think we could avoid a hostile confrontation even if we approached them peacefully."

"Huh?"

"Why do you think they're coming back, just the three of them?"

"There was something about enemy detection, maybe they found out the dragon died?"

"So they're coming back to see if we're alive and ready to be saved? Wasn't their policy to leave dead weight behind?"

"Ah, it was."

Tomochika recalled Yazaki's words and dropped her shoulders dejectedly.

"That's why I'm thinking these guys are moving on their own. They're probably trying to get the jump on the rest of the class and made the left behind luggage their target, in which case I doubt they'll see us as anything other than an obstacle."

"That's still speculation... right?"

"Right, but it's got a decent possibility of being right. Since I've been thinking about wanting to protect you I'd rather avoid potential risks altogether. But I still value your opinion; let's see what they're up to first."

"If they're only after the luggage then how about running away or hiding?"

"We've probably been spotted already, and I doubt we can run away from someone that can fly. Actually, can you tell me who's who?"

They were now close enough for Yogiri to be able to make out their faces as well.

According to Tomochika, the good-but-superficial-looking one on the left was Ryouda Higashida.

The smaller one in the middle with the brown hair, Sadaaki Fukuhara.

And on the right was the plump Daimon Hanakawa.

A short wait later all three of them landed a couple meters ahead of them.

"Tomochika-tan, thou art alive! H o w!? What an unexpected development this is! My humble plan to turn your corpse into a zombie and that zombie into a slave to unload all my desires on, turned to nothing! Just like that!"

Hanakawa's theatrical voice was thoroughly disgusting. To think someone could make such an unpleasant impression after just a couple words, Yogiri couldn't help but be oddly impressed.

"See? I told you they might be alive. With Charm Up's short duration there's a good chance the dragon simply left."

Now Higashida was talking. It appeared their enemy detection didn't tell them about a detected monster's death. The dragon's remains were on the opposite side of the bus, out of their view.

"What are you talking about anyway, ain't it better like that? Zombie puppets are gross."

The mocking voice belonged to Fukuhara. He had a small frame and a childish appearance in general, but there was something conceited about him.

"Excuse you!? Fukuhara-dono, your power is wasted! A pearl thrown before a swine! Hand it over, I shall utilize it properly and create a harem of zombies!"

"Killing someone just so I can turn them into a zombie is dumb."

"Aha! Well as it happens I had considered a scenario like this; this is why you always carry a collar of slavery with you! If she's alive then I shan't need to rely on you, Fukuhara-dono!"

"That's gross, man. Don't carry something like that around."

"Now he has a point though, if she's against it at first and obedient later then that's double the fun."

"Ah, no, I'm not the rape kind of guy, Fukuhara-dono."

"Then go away or something?"

"Hmm, but I do love netorare. My crush, right before my eyes... there's just something about that, isn't there? Oh, you wouldn't mind leaving the 'gentle shoulder to cry on' role to me afterwards, would you?"

"You're so gross."

"Can you leave it at that, you two? Look at poor Dannoura-san's shocked face."

"That reminds me, Takatou's here as well. Look how he's standing in front of her being all protective, ain't that brave?"

"C-could it be that Takatou-shi already has the role of the netorare'd boyfriend!? I won't allow that! Tomochika has to be mine!"

"Oh, I like that. I was planning on killing him right away but let's go with that instead. He's the guy always spacing out, ain't he? I wanna see what kind of face he'll make while losing his girl."

"Aren't you lucky, Takatou-kun. You get to live a while longer."

The way they acted like everything would go their way was part disturbing and part agitating. Yogiri's standpoint started drifting back towards just killing them.

"Um, I have no idea what's going on, but what I did figure out is that getting along with them doesn't seem doable."

Tomochika got closer to Yogiri and told him so in a whisper.

Yogiri thought about what to do from here.

Killing them was simple enough, but there wasn't anything to be gained in that--given their current situation he'd rather draw out as much information from them as possible.

'Oh well, let's try talking with them,' Yogiri had made up his mind, but Higashida took action before him.

He raised his right hand.

Yogiri determined that his conduct didn't pose any immediate danger. Higashida had no killing intent and his fist wasn't facing Yogiri or Tomochika.

"Fireball!"

His right hand started sparkling and in the next moment something had passed right by Yogiri. That was all.

Usually one would expect a flying globe of fire from a 'fireball,' but Yogiri didn't see anything like that. There should have been the sound of impact from hitting the bus behind them, but he heard nothing at all.

thump

After a short moment's wait the noise of something heavy falling to the ground echoed through the plains. Yogiri turned around and witnessed a bizarre scene.

The bus had lost its back half and the noise he heard just now was made by the remaining bus frame tilting over and crashing into the earth.

A perfectly straight line of the grass-covered plain had been hollowed out, continuing all the way to the forest like a concave road. But it didn't stop there; where the road of nothingness entered the forest a gaping hole had opened.

Whatever Higashida brought forth, it soundlessly erased everything in its path of trajectory.

"Your Fireball's ridiculous as ever, Higashida-dono! Be honest, how often do you go 'ah, but it is no Hellflame, it is a Fireball!'"

Higashida smugly accepted Hanakawa's praise. It was the kind of carefree attitude that made it clear they weren't worried about the possibility of a counter-attack in the least. Then again, with that kind of power one's surroundings might just appear like no more than trash.

"Can only use basic tier magic, after all. All I trained while leveling was this so now it's strong enough to take down demon lords. Oh yeah, guess who blew off the top of Mount Karuone?"

"No! Was that you, Higashida-dono!? Now that's what I call a hero summon. 'As expected of hero-sama,' as they say!"

"Higashida's lucky he got here as a hero, I started out as a soulmancer at the bottom of the demon lord's army."

Yogiri had no idea what they were talking about.

From what he could tell they seemed quite used to this 'System' they had received from the sage, but according to Tomochika it wasn't that long since they left for their first mission. Fukuhara carried on.

"Anyway, did that establish the difference in powers between us? Resistance is futile. Dannoura is coming over here, Takatou will stay and watch from where he is."

They must have thought that giving a demonstration of their power would settle things; the idea of Yogiri and Tomochika resisting them at this point didn't even to cross their minds.

"That's some major firepower."

Yogiri talked with admiration as he inspected the crumbling remains of the bus.

The Fireball must've been a sphere of 10 meters in diameter. Everything it passed through burned down to less than ash, evaporated even, and what was even more impressive was that everything outside its diameter was hardly affected, a clean cut. He tried touching the bus' frame--only a faint heat remained.

"Higashida-kun! Why are you doing this!?"

"Well, we decided we'd live to our heart's content if we ever got another chance, and now that time has come. Gotta do what you gotta do, you know?"

"And my body falls into that category!?"

Tomochika talked with her arms wrapped around her body.

"I'm impressed you can talk like that in this situation, Dannoura-san. You look like you're able to survive on your own even in a different universe."

Yogiri expected her to be petrified by fear after hearing their discussion, but she was surprisingly energetic.

"How nice, when did you two become such good friends?"

Fukuhara talked in a joking manner, but his speech was tinged with jealousy. Warped as it may be, he clearly held affection towards Tomochika.

"For now I'll try making them more cooperative."

Yogiri talked to Tomochika in a gentle tone.

She may have been giving off a confident impression, but she was probably full of anxiety.

Silencing their twisted mouths and giving Tomochika some peace of mind was Yogiri's first course of action.

CHAPTER 7

ETERNAL FORCE BLIZZARD, TARGET DIES

"Die."

Yogiri channeled his power.

"Gehah! Die, he says, can your vocabulary be any more limite—"

Hanakawa regarded Yogiri's remark as nothing more than some hopeless resistance and spat out a scoff-like mock, but he quickly noticed the anomaly next to him.

Higashida's knees gave in and his body collapsed. With his torso tipping forward he fell flat to the ground, where he stopped moving entirely.

"Higashida-dono? What might be the matter?"

Hanakawa was dumbfounded.

"I said die and he died, guess the relation there and this will be quick. Make a move and another one dies."

Yogiri declared his warning, but Fukuhara paid no heed to it and walked over to Higashida. Yogiri pointed at him with a 'die.'

Fukuhara probably had the best intentions towards Higashida, but it should not be. He collapsed onto Higashida and ceased moving.

"Didn't I tell you not to move? Move and you die. Understand?"

"A-, ah, wha-"

Hanakawa froze.

He didn't seem capable of understanding nor accepting his situation.

However, he did seem to understand that something abnormal happened, and that the one responsible for it was Yogiri.

Yogiri determined the current circumstances were enough for a discussion to form.

"Alright, I'll explain my power now."

"Wait, what!? I could sort of guess you had something to do with what happened to the dragon, but I saw that you didn't want to talk about it so I avoided asking you about it! Isn't it some secret!?"

It seemed Tomochika had some curiosity pent up.

"Not really a secret, explaining it just seemed like a bother earlier."

"Seemed like a bother he says, oi!"

"Hanakawa doesn't look very bright, if I don't explain it properly he'll come asking for a fight again, don't you think?"

"Okay, okay. Fine then, let's hear about your power."

Yogiri was prepared to be reproached for suddenly killing two of them--not that he felt unjustified in his actions, he just thought Tomochika would be against it.

However, that wasn't what bothered Tomochika.

"Before I begin, Hanakawa, can you go and check whether they're actually dead? Don't worry, you can move."

It was necessary to make him acknowledge reality and let it go through his head. If he wasn't convinced they were dead he would just interpret the situation in some conveniently hopeful way, maybe even attack them.

Hanakawa crouched down next to them and timidly shook their corpses.

Neither of them showed a reaction.

"Heal!"

He shouted something like a magic spell.

It sounded like restoration magic, but there wasn't much effect it could have on the dead. The two bodies emitted light for a moment, but that was all he achieved.

"Heal! Heal! Heal! Fuhaha! I'm a healer, alright?! No matter what kind of injury or illness, everything's healed in a single moment! Such is the cheat tier restoration magic that allowed me to survive in this world despite being clubbed, ripped, tattered,... but they aren't moving, what!?"

"Do you get it?"

"Y-you monster! Randomly killing people, that's not normal!"

"You're not one to talk."

Yogiri knocked on the bus behind him.

"That was pretty dangerous, earlier. Might've missed on purpose, but you don't have a right to complain about being paid back after firing a lethal attack like that."

"E-even so, Fukuhara-dono didn't do anything! And (this is important) neither did I—!"

"You're saying that despite realizing it's not going to work, right? No matter how you look at it, you three teamed up and both of you approved of Higashida's conduct, didn't you?"

Hanakawa was at a loss for words. He said no more and Yogiri began his explanation.

"My power is basically 'instantly kill any target.' Just by thinking about wanting to kill someone they die."

"That's way too ridiculous! H u h!? Are we talking about Eternal Force Blizzard, target dies!!?"

Hanakawa raised his voice in a shriek.

"T-that's too cheaty! Normally you'd avoid phrasing something like that so straightforwardly! Are you making fun of parallel universes!? How does that even work without a status!"

"Not like I know what this status would look like in the first place. Actually, I'm the one wondering whether you really have something like that."

From Yogiri's point of view the whole talk about a system and statuses seemed exceedingly suspicious.

"So that's what killed the dragon, huh. But was it really a good idea to tell him about your power?"

Tomochika asked; keeping it a secret seemed more advantageous.

"For the threat. I need to make the other party understand the circumstances or they won't cooperate, but they won't understand unless I explain it. Even if I demonstrated it, comprehending what happened would be difficult for them."

"True, personally I find it hard to believe as well..."

Yogiri turned back towards Hanakawa.

"So, do you understand now? If no then I'll be killing you, that seems the least like a bother."

"I have reached comprehension! Please stop looking at me with those 'yare yare' kind of cool protagonists' eyes like you're seriously about to kill me!"

He looked like he thought he was moments from being killed and screamed for his life.

"Alright, come closer then. Talking across such a distance is weird."

Yogiri sat down on the grass with his back leaned on the bus.

Tomochika leisurely sat down next to him.

Hanakawa started trudging towards the two.

"Stop."

But Yogiri halted him right after he set into motion.

"I-is something the matter?"

"You were about to do something right now, weren't you?"

"Wha-whattatat, what mighteth thee be talking about?"

It was impressive how suspicious he appeared.

"There's something I didn't mention about my power. Here's the thing, I also have the power of perceiving people's killing intent."

"Excuse me?"

"Like I said, it's a two-in-one. Automatically making people die for wanting to kill me is also doable."

"Are you freaking kidding me, dude! Isn't there n o t h i n g to counter that!?"

"I wouldn't say that. If a master assassin capable of killing someone without leaking the slightest sense of bloodlust attacked me at a speed faster than I could perceive then that would be the end. Anyway, I recommend paying very careful attention from here on out."

And so Hanakawa obediently walked up to his classmates and timidly knelt down with his buttocks on his heels.

"Alright, there's a lot of things I want to ask."

"I get it, I'll tell you about whatever you ask, even the things you didn't ask for..."

"Just the things I asked for is fine."

Hanakawa was completely seized with fear, there wasn't a shred of rebellion left inside him.

"Why were you guys that full of yourselves? It hasn't been that long since the system or whatever was installed in you, has it?"

Yogiri was suspicious. Even if they were given some kind of absurd power by the sage, they shouldn't have been able to master it in such a short time.

On top of that there was their ability to fly and the way they incinerated the bus, he couldn't imagine that being the power of a low level.

"Well actually, the other two and me, we weren't summoned to this world for the first time. It's our New Game+..."

Bit by bit, Hanakawa's story unfolded.

CHAPTER 8

YOU CAN MAKE ME A SLAVE! I'LL NEVER DISOBEY!

"So basically, you defeated the demon lord and got sent home."

Yogiri gave a quick rundown of Hanakawa's excessively embellished story.

"Would you mind not just summing up my cheat adventure in another world like that!"

"Even though it was going nowhere at first there was more useful information than expected. So how exactly did you get back to our world?"

Right now the highest priority was adapting to the new world and surviving, but the ultimate goal was to return to earth. If nothing else, Yogiri wanted Tomochika to get back home.

"Well, about that. Last time's summoning was performed by the head magician of the kingdom of Iman with the condition of defeating the neighboring lands' demon lord; the moment we did that we were sent back home. This time I don't really understand what's going on."

"I never really cared so I can't tell, but did these guys ever disappear from school for such a long time, Dannoura-san?"

"Not that I'd know, although I think they were absent because of illnesses here and there."

"The time we spent here was around one year, but upon our return only a couple hours had gone by. The flow of time between this and our world appears to be different."

That was some more good news, Yogiri thought. It looked like they would have to spend quite some time in this world, but it sounds like the time discrepancy when returning home wasn't going to be too bad. Tomochika threw Hanakawa a question of her own.

"What's this about a demon lord? Shouldn't this world be peaceful now that he's dead?"

"Demon lords are the kings of demon kingdoms, but there's more than one of them and we only defeated the demon lord of the demon kingdom next to the Iman kingdom. I dare say Iman returned to harmony, thanks to us! Probably."

Apparently the plains they were currently in was part of the kingdom of Mani and quite far away from Iman.

"I wonder if we can also get back by defeating some demon lord? Well, guess we've got no choice but to ask the sage that summoned us about that."

Yogiri said so as he thought about the many unsettled questions.

Summonings may come with predetermined conditions, but that whole aspect was unclear. And assuming there really were conditions, they most likely wouldn't be easy to fulfill.

Sages summoning people from other worlds on a search for new sages. It didn't sound like something where they'd just let them go home.

"I'm not particularly trying to return home, personally... There's still my dream of a cheat harem in another world..."

Hanakawa mumbled, seemingly gotten used to the situation.

"So what's up with you guys quietly returning to everyday life after getting sent back?"

Given that they acquired that kind of power and going by their earlier attitude they seemed like the kind of people to do as they pleased even in their home world, yet Yogiri didn't recall anything noteworthy having happened.

"Of course the first thing we did when we got back was test whether we could still use our powers! But, well, we couldn't."

"And after being summoned back to this world you also regained your previous powers, huh. Are there any other guys like that in our class?"

"I only know about us three."

But if three people like that were among them then it was definitely possible that there were more. Yogiri made a mental note of it and asked another question.

"Are people's statuses something that's visible to anybody?"

"Aha, normal people can't! But then there are people like me who overleveled their analyze skill!"

With a smug grin Hanakawa went on a monologue of how exactly he went about leveling his analyze skill, but Yogiri didn't pay attention.

Even if it wasn't a common ability, they shouldn't be optimistic about the lack of the system in them going unnoticed. He decided to be prepared for people figuring out that the system wasn't installed in them.

"What is the rest of the class up to right now?"

"The second mission started and it looks like they left for the royal capital."

When they arrived at the city visible in the north they had successfully cleared the first mission. The second mission started right after, with the objective of achieving a heroic deed and becoming a sage.

"Heroic deed?"

"Something amazing that anyone would acknowledge. There's various acts that fall under that category, but apparently the royal family's cooperation is indispensable for them, so they started heading to the royal capital while raising their levels on the way."

"Which is when you three slipped out and flew over here."

"No way I'd continue leveling at this point! Didst thou forget that I was robbed of my harem life and deported from this world when we defeated the demon lord the last time? Is it not only natural that I would enjoy myself and do whatever I please this time!"

"Enjoy yourself, eh. Well whatever. Are there any other cities around here?"

"The closest one is definitely the one further north. There's another one south from here, but it's quite the walk until there. I wouldn't recommend it on foot."

From there Yogiri continued to ask questions as he thought of them, mostly about this world and the system.

"That's about everything I wanted to ask. Dannoura-san, do you have any more questions?"

"Huh, me? Hmm. Hanakawa, you guys are strong right? Didn't you think about killing the dragon?"

Tomochika stared at him with reproachful eyes.

She must have thought that they could have avoided the current state of things if the three returnees had just defeated the dragon from the start.

"That... we were scared, okay? That dragon might've been doable, but that sage is crazy bad news! If her intention was having us clear her first mission then we had no choice but to obediently follow her plan."

"I admit it was scary when she did that thing with her hand, but was it that bad? I thought you guys were plenty strong as well?"

"You're only saying that because you couldn't see her status, Tomochika-tan! Her level was over one hundred million, and the most terrifying part was the way it kept going up by the second! No way we could take it up with a monster like that!"

"This whole talk about levels still doesn't tell me much."

Yogiri spoke as he tried imagining the strength of such a high level, but he didn't really have anything to compare it to.

"Higashida-dono was level 1000; I'm not that high, but nonetheless a solid 99."

"After hearing something like one hundred million a level in the double digits sure sounds shabby."

"Not like I can do anything about that! A human's limit is level 99, unless you have a skill that let's you break that limit or a class that doesn't have any level requirements you can't go any higher!"

"Oh, I have another question. Everyone went along with what Yazaki-kun said, was that because he did something to them?"

"Yazaki-shi's skills, mhm. The General class has the skills 「Charisma」, 「Leadership」 and 「Strategy Drafting」. After approving of one of his plans, going against them becomes practically impossible, but the coercive power behind his skills isn't that special. If one of the participants considers themselves disadvantaged by the strategy his skill loses its effect."

Tomochika dejectedly dropper her head.

She seemed to be thinking of her friend Romiko Jougasaki. Going by Hanakawa's explanation, Romiko must have approved of the strategy of leaving behind those that didn't gain any powers.

"Hm, if it's about being disadvantaged then us four should have been at a massive disadvantage. Was our standpoint not even factored in because we aren't connected to the system?"

The leadership skill was most likely the ability to suppress minor dissatisfaction in order to allow for smooth action as a group. It may be unable to take effect if there was firm opposition against a strategy, but since the four that didn't get the system installed in them didn't have the right to disagree in the first place it carried out as drafted. Hanakawa agreed.

"That's probably what it was, quite indeed."

Without any more questions to ask they fell into silence.

Yogiri decided there was no more need for Hanakawa and pointed his hand towards him.

He could activate his power without pointing or voicing his intention, but this way it was easier to focus on his target.

"Wha-! I beg thy pardon! Thee wouldn't be planning to kill me!? Not the Eternal Force Blizzard!"

"Don't give it a weird name. Anyway, let's wrap this up."

"Why!? Explain thyself!"

"Just feels like leaving you alive would turn into a bother."

"Don't just put it like that! How lightly doth thee thinketh of life and death!?"

"Guess I better kill the guy with malice towards me,' about that lightly."

A quick look behind Hanakawa revealed the proofs of Yogiri's words, one leaning on top of the other.

"No such thing! I swear I bear no ill will towards you! Have mercy—!"

Hanakawa knelt on the ground with his head pressed into the grass, begging for his life. He even returned to a normal manner of speech.

Yogiri was a little troubled--it wasn't like he wanted to kill everyone he met, he just thought that someone with knowledge of his power running around freely might turn into an issue.

"T-that's it! A slave! You can make me a slave! I'll never disobey!"

Hanakawa said a word not heard often in everyday life.

CHAPTER 9

BECAUSE YOUR BOOBS WERE SOFT?

"Yeah, right. Who'd trust you just because you said you wouldn't disobey?"

"Aha, but I have just the thing for that! This is a parallel universe, you can trust it to have that kind of stuff!"

So spoke Hanakawa as he retrieved something out of thin air.

"What did you just do?"

Yogiri was on guard.

Mere moments ago Hanakawa was empty-handed, but all of a sudden he was holding something. Based on his lack of killing intent it wasn't anything dangerous, but it did remind Yogiri of his limited knowledge of the 'System.' There was still need for caution.

"I, uh, took an item out of my item box?"

"Can anybody do that?"

"Well actually it's a rare tier skill that you don't see it often! Although because of it I ended up having to carry the whole hero party's items... Ah, that's it! Making me your companion would come with a bunch of advantages! You can carry along whatever you want thanks to my item box, with my healing magic you'll never have to worry about an injury, and since it's my second time here I'm more than familiar with this world; isn't that magnificent! I'll definitely be of use to you! So don't kill me please—!"

Hanakawa begged while rubbing his head against the ground. Quietly, he mumbled.

"Err, what might you be thinking, Dannoura-san? If you could help me convince Takatou-dono here, well, I would be most obliged..."

Ever so slightly he glanced up to Tomochika.

She was clearly troubled by the complicated situation, still remembering the way Hanakawa first approached them, but before long she had made up her mind and voiced her decision.

"It's thanks to Takatou-kun's rescue that I'm still alive. Given the fact that I owe him my life I don't think I have the right to complain about his method of protecting me nor about his way of dealing with you."

"Hoaahhh! Tomochika-tan, since when were you this cool! Although I believe that emotionally crying out a good girl line like 'can't we just avoid killing as a whole!?' would have been more appropriate heroine behavior!"

"So, what's that thing you pulled out?"

Yogiri looked at the circle-shaped object that Hanakawa still held in his hand. Made of metal and crude in appearance it seemed to be a collar.

"This would be a collar of slavery! After putting it on it becomes impossible to go against the will of the first person you see, an ultra rare magic item! Look, first you do like this and then——!"

Hanakawa fiddled with the collar until it suddenly split into two pieces. He then put them around his own neck, made them snap back together and looked at Tomochika.

"My Mistress——! Please, give me your order! I'll even lick your shoes! In fact, don't mind if I do——!"

Hanakawa, still kneeling on the ground, waddled up to Tomochika.

"Ew! Stop!"

And he stopped on the spot, yet Yogiri wasn't entirely convinced.

"Hm, I see. But the part about becoming unable to go against the master's will is questionable, maybe he's just acting."

"It's kind of gross... Actually it's super gross. Is there a way to stop being master?"

"I don't want to say it, I don't wanna! But I can't go against it— While the slave status can't be stopped no matter what, the master status can be transferred to someone else."

"Oh, okay. Passing it on to Takatou-kun."

Tomochika's declaration didn't have a hint of attachment.

"Eeeeh! Why! W h y! Life as Tomochika-tan's slave didn't seem too bad in its own way!"

"Not sure what to do with this either. Anyway, fine, let's forget about killing you."

Yogiri felt like the whole situation was starting to get silly.

"Truthfully!?"

"Although we won't be taking you along either. Oh yeah, there's a forest over there, right?"

"The Forest of Beasts, indeed. A region governed by a bestial king and uninhabited by humans, I am told. It's unrelated to demon lord extermination so I never went there, but from what I've heard it's swarming with monsters. Fortunately that forest's beasts keep a distance to human civilization, as long as one doesn't step foot in it there is nothing to worry about."

"Go there and await further orders."

"Did you listen to what I just said!? I'm telling you, it's dangerou-... Wait! I don't want to stand up! My feet are moving on their own!"

"Oh right."

It looked like Yogiri recalled something.

"Yes!? Could this be the part where you playfully go 'just kidding'!?"

Hanakawa turned around with just his head, hope in his eyes.

"I forgot about silencing you: Don't tell anyone a single word about us."

"That's all it was!? It's still not too late, you know? I would work myself to the bone serving you!"

"Oh, and——"

"Y e s!?"

"If you've got any valuables with you leave them here."

"Are you seriously mugging me!?"

Using his item box Hanakawa scattered his items on the grass.

"Alright, bye. Hurry on up."

"Wait just a second! Would you mind not extracting all the information and money you can from people just to then send them to certain death because you don't feel like dealing with them!? Seriously, could you not!?"

He screamed all he could but his legs wouldn't stop.

And so Hanakawa entered the Forest of Beasts against his own will.

Yogiri got on his feet and started piling up all the items that were scattered on the ground. Gold, silver and all kinds of gems. He wasn't familiar with their value in this

world, but he had confidence they'd bring in a decent sum.

"Now if we only had something to put it all into."

"Ah, I think there were some people with pretty big bags in our class. I'll go get them."

With those words Tomochika went and got two backpacks from the bus. Granted, it was a kind of emergency situation, but nonetheless her lack of hesitation in stealing people's property surprised Yogiri.

There was also the fact that people had died, which she didn't seem particularly worried about either.

Although rather than being courageous it may have been that the situation still didn't feel real to her.

Dropping the backpacks on the ground, Tomochika spoke.

"Alright, let's divide it up and carry everything along. We should keep the expensive looking gems and stuff well hidden, just in case. Some of it might even serve use."

They finished packing their bags and Yogiri sat down on the grass. He felt a little drowsy, possibly because he repeatedly used his power.

"And here's something to eat. Could only find snacks and candy though."

"Oh right, we still haven't eaten dinner."

Tomochika brought some cookies and light snacks like chips.

The original plan was that they would have dinner after arriving at the hotel, so naturally they were hungry.

The two classmates began their plain meal.

"I guess this takes care of all the immediate problems."

"Was it really fine to deal with Hanakawa-kun like that?"

In response to Yogiri's breath of relief Tomochika asked him with a conflicted expression.

"Taking him along would be a little... you know. We have no way of knowing whether he really turned into a slave, who knows when he might backstab us."

"Doubtful as ever, huh. He didn't look like he was acting to me."

"Even if he wasn't, what if that collar's effects are only temporary?"

"So how about me then? How do you know I won't backstab you?"

"That'd be fine. Protecting you was my own decision, I wouldn't have the right to complain."

Those were Yogiri's genuine feelings.

"Say, I know this is weird to bring up, but we barely talked before today, right? So how come you're, well, going this far to protect me?"

"Hm? That's a good question."

Being asked that, Yogiri fell into thought. It felt only natural that he had to protect Tomochika, but now that he was asked about it he started wondering why that was.

"Nonono, there's got to be something, right? You know, something along the lines of 'your beauty made me want to protect you with all I have'?"

Tomochika spoke jokingly, but her tone still sounded a little shocked.

"Ahh!"

"Did you remember?"

"Because your boobs were soft?"

"There is not a single decent man in this world, damn it!"

Tomochika's shout echoed through the plains.

INTERMISSION

SPONTANEOUS DEATH ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT

Whenever Youichi Sudou found himself before the doors in front of him he would feel a sense of unease. Now was no exception.

Even after all this time he wasn't sure how to approach Sion, she who ascended to the status of sage. Did she truly aspire to be one or did she sacrifice herself for their sakes? Worthless thoughts ran through his mind, but he dropped them with a shake of his head.

Now was long past the time to ponder worries like these, he had his own duties to fulfil; the duties of an acolyte, a sage's follower.

Youichi knocked.

"Come in."

A voice sounded right next to his ears by magical means and without wasting any more time he opened the doors.

The room beyond was made up of white and pink; white furniture with exquisitely carved feet, a pink rug in match with the pink curtains, and above the canopy bed a chandelier with flower motif.

In the middle of such a maidenlike room lay the sage Sion, half buried under huge cushions. Lazing about in a loose negligee it was apparent she paid little heed to the fact she had a visitor.

"My, if it isn't Youichi-kun. Did something happen?"

She was a little surprised upon seeing it was Youichi who had entered her room.

"Was it not you who requested of me to come give you a report, Sage-sama?"

He walked up to Sion with a sigh. She was the same as always.

"Youichi-kun, you can drop that manner of speech when it's just us two."

Sion unhappily knit her eyebrows and Youichi sighed once more.

"Damn it, fine. Thing's just, eventually I'll screw up if I don't constantly talk like that."

"There aren't any problems if a sage says it's fine, no?"

"You expect the rest to stay disciplined if they see me talk to you like that?"

"Fine, fine. So, how about that report?"

"First off, the invaders. Kurayami was repelled by Sage Santarou-sama, but the collateral damage was enormous. The Artana region has been turned into a desert, recovery most likely impossible."

"Just repelled?"

"It got away. Santarou-sama went 'I proper wrecked it, doubt it'll dare show itself again,' but it's questionable whether that thing has those kind of mental capacities in the first place."

"I see. Please carry on."

She spoke in an unsatisfied tone, visibly disagreeing with Santarou's way of handling the matter.

"Sage Lain-sama confronted the Hungering Wolf King but that, too, ended in repelling it."

"In Lain's case it's understandable. You know, since she loves animals."

"Hedgehog's case is starting to get messy. Sage Yumehisa-sama went out to deal with it, but got herself killed instead. That's the second one this year. At this rate it'll just

keep causing

casualties, can't we ask the Great Sage to handle it?"

"That won't do. You know how busy Grandfather is."

What you mean 'Grandfather,' as if.

There was not a drop of shared blood between Sion and the Great Sage; the whole 'Grandchild of the Great Sage' spiel was no more than a title. No more than proof of the Great Sage's warped game of playing house.

"As you know, flirting with his slaves is a most important matter to Grandfather."

She poked a little fun at him herself. Youichi hadn't actually counted on the Great Sage's help, he just felt like giving it a try.

"Regarding Hedgehog, let's send out a team of sages to deal with it, I'll take part."

Their scope of knowledge of Hedgehog didn't extend much further than its appearance. A slender human body clad in metal of black luster and countless spikes that could only be described as a mix between a needle and a blade protruding from the joints all over its armor; the reason it was called Hedgehog. Based on its behavior the current theory suggested it was most likely a machine.

"Those would be all the invaders we don't know the type of. As for the angel type, two entities showed up. The one that appeared in Zabora was eradicated by Sage Shirou-sama, the one in Ento by Sage Yoshifumi-sama. Thing is, there's something about the angels that's bothering us. Their way of appearing in near random locations like up till now is changing."

"Could they have noticed?"

"They don't seem to have a full grasp on the location, but it looks like they're closing in on it. They'll probably pinpoint it eventually."

But Youichi didn't know what they were trying to achieve. The question of why there

were beings targeting this world was still unclear.

The Great Sage might've well been the only one that knew, but the day he would get over his sloth and spread that knowledge was unlikely to ever dawn.

"Next up, about the sage candidates."

"Aah! I was watching up until the dragon randomly died, what happened afterwards?"

"Oi. Aren't you suspicious about that 'the dragon randomly died' part?"

"Wasn't it like level 1000? Probably some kind of spontaneous death on the spur of the moment."

Sion was serious in saying that.

For her, whose level went beyond a hundred million, a dragon of level 1000 was little more than a flying insect.

Youichi didn't know how to feel. Sion herself probably didn't think she changed, but overwhelming power like hers twisted one's personality without mercy. No matter how much one attempted to contain it, that arrogance would show itself in one's every act.

"Well, whatever. We'll talk about that together with something related to it later. First of all, they successfully cleared the first mission. Four casualties."

"I suppose that's fair. They abandoned the four powerless candidates, then? Granted, that is the most reasonable course of action. It's unavoidable that some individuals are incompatible, making proper use of them is part of the mission."

"About that... Of the ones that died, only two were powerless. The other two were among the five S ranked candidates."

For convenience, Sion had assigned one of four ranks to all the current cycle's candidates.

S Rank: Individuals that hadn't arrived in this world for the first time, already had the system installed in them and possessed ample strength. The favorites.

A Rank: Holders of excellent skills with the potential to surpass those of S Rank. The rivals.

B Rank: Those with regular skills, unlikely to grow any stronger than the native populace, very low possibility of astounding growth. The lacking.

C Rank: Owners of weak skills, unlikely to reach even the level of natives, extremely low possibility of incredible growth. The deficient.

Those without power are treated as unable to become sages and left unranked.

"Well that's unexpected. What's their situation right now?"

"They left the four powerless kids behind as bait and headed to the city. Afterwards they were supposed to travel to the royal capital like the advice in the second mission's description told them, but for whatever reason three of the S ranked candidates returned to the starting point. There, two of them died for reasons unknown and one wandered into the forest."

"Reasons unknown?"

"Exactly. Just like the dragon, sudden death. A dragon randomly dying might be odd and nothing else, but isn't it strange for further deaths to occur in that same spot? They died

right after coming into contact with the powerless ones that were left behind in the bus. Obviously, suspecting them would be the natural course of action, but what could powerless individuals like them even do?"

This world was one of swords and magic.

Magic made all kinds of absurd acts possible and swords could split apart entire mountains with a single slash. However, all that was thanks to the blessing of the system called Battle Song, and the powerless failed in receiving that blessing. They were worthless, nothing more than regular humans.

"Going only by what took place it would appear to be the work of instant death magic... but there were no mages back in our world, in Japan. Right, Sion?"

"Who knows? The Japan of our time and the Japan of today might be different. Maybe the world we know underwent some extreme changes?"

"Like that'd happen. Anyway, the issue is the possible existence of this person capable of something like instant death magic."

"But is that really something to worry about? Youichi-kun, do you know the reason instant death magic isn't that popular?"

"Cause of its inefficiency, right?"

He was the one that raised the instant death mage theory, but he had some doubts himself.

Instant death magic certainly existed, but due to the excessive magic power required to invoke it, just using regular magic to achieve the same result was more efficient.

In addition to that, when using it against a foe stronger than oneself it would simply be resisted, which meant that the only time instant death magic was applicable was when fighting opponents far weaker than oneself and killable far more efficiently.

"Exactly. If instant death magic were actually useful then everybody would be using it. But it is not. It was considered many times in many wars, but what history proved was that the ways to counter it are just too numerous. It's fairly common knowledge that there is no, nor can there be, instant death magic with a guaranteed chance of success."

"Let's at least stay cautious then. I know they're powerless, but can we include them in our targets of surveillance as C ranks?"

"You're such a worrywart. But sure, if that gives you peace of mind then please, do as you like."

Watching Sion brush the matter aside as if to say 'who cares,' Youichi thought once more of her ridiculous power being the reason for her attitude.

Was it really fine to be this optimistic?

Indeed, instant death magic could only be used on those below oneself.
Then, what if he or she, the powerless, was a being of unthinkable height?

—*Nonsense.*

It was impossible for someone without the system's blessing.

And yet, Youichi began to feel dread towards the existence of the two powerless candidates.

【 ACT 2 】

CHAPTER 11

OK! UNDERSTAND!

JAPANESE, REGULAR CUSTOMERS!

By the time Yogiri and Tomochika arrived at the city it was already dusk.

"Ended up being quite the distance. Since we walked for about an hour I guess around four kilometers?"

"Wow—— To think it would take us this long to arrive, I certainly didn't expect that, hmm——"

Tomochika replied with quite some sarcasm. They could have arrived much sooner, but Yogiri suddenly fell asleep and their departure was delayed.

"Not my fault I get tired from using my power."

"Isn't that pretty dangerous then?"

Since their safety relied almost entirely on Yogiri's power Tomochika couldn't help but be worried by the sudden drawback.

"Not really? The sleepiness isn't so bad that I can't wake up when I feel like it, and since I can sense killing intent even while asleep there isn't really any problem."

"What's up with that utter lack of demerits..."

Tomochika mumbled next to Yogiri, who looked at the city now in front of him.

The wall they could already see from the bus appeared to circle the entire city, restricting access to a few guarded locations.

They saw what appeared like an entrance and headed there.

"Hey, doesn't it look like they're about to close the gate?"

"Isn't it normal to close them over night?"

"Well let's hurry up and make a run for it!"

"Hurrying's fine, but can't we just wa——"

Tomochika broke into a run right away and Yogiri followed shortly behind.

"E-excuse me! We would like to enter the city!"

"@@@@@@@@@?"

"I have no clue what you're saying!"

Tomochika approached who appeared to be a gatekeeper, but the response she got were words she couldn't even assign a language to. The gatekeeper had blonde hair and strong facial features, a face far from Japanese; hearing fluent Japanese come out of his mouth would probably have been more perplexing than whatever language he spoke instead.

"Well, it would be strange if it were any different."

Yogiri considered that this would be the case, although he hoped it wouldn't. The inability to speak with the locals would be quite an issue.

"A little, understand. Japanese people?"

Suddenly the gatekeeper addressed them in Japanese, albeit fairly broken.

"Right! Can we please enter?"

"Wait. Feudal lord, I'll get."

The two students were lead to a room in the wall and after waiting in their chairs for a while the gatekeeper returned with a man, most likely the feudal lord he mentioned. He was covered in extravagant clothes and clearly Japanese.

"More Japanese, eh. You from a different group than the ones that got here at noon? You guys are such a headache, what do you want?"

The man didn't even try to hide his bad mod.

Feudal lords. According to Hanakawa, they were acolytes who received a particularly influential social rank.

Yogiri replied without letting the feudal lord's tone get to him.

"We lost sight of those guys from noon and are trying to catch up to them right now. Could we enter the city?"

After discussing the matter they decided that their first objective should be to regroup with their classmates. It was questionable whether they could reconcile with the rest of their class after being left behind as bait, but since the sages seemed to be the key to returning to their own world they decided that tagging along with the group currently trying to become sages was their smartest course of action.

"Tch. Usually there's a fee for entering, but not like you've got money anyway. You're lucky the sages ordered not to obstruct any sage candidates. Fine, enter."

"Appreciate it. Just wondering, how much would the entry fee be?"

"Thousand en a person."

They probably carried that much with them, but Yogiri decided to go along with his hospitality and enter for free.

"Apparently the ones that entered before us left for the royal capital, any advice on how to get there ourselves?"

"Just because I was told not to obstruct you doesn't mean I'm gonna help you, go figure it out yourself."

"Well thanks."

There didn't seem to be any point in staying and they got up from their chairs.

"Oh right. Since you ain't got any money you also got no place to sleep, right? Just the girl, I wouldn't mind letting you stay at my mansion. How about it, eh?"

"I'm fine!"

She ignored the vulgar expression on his face, grabbed Yogiri's hand and dragged him along as she left. When they exited the wall and arrived in the city she finally stopped and let go of Yogiri's hand.

"Were you so against the idea?"

The way she hurried outside struck Yogiri as odd.

"Well, yeah, it did bother me, but what I was more worried about was his life. You know, just in case you decided to kill him."

"Come on, I'm not some serial killer."

"Oh my. I must say, your lack of self-awareness is a little surprising."

"Hey now, not like I'd kill someone just because I can't stand them or something. You should reflect on your eye for people."

Yogiri was a little hurt. It felt like he was thought of as going around killing anything and everything, harmful or not.

"Ah, look! It totally feels like a fantasy town here! Aa! There's even people that look like cats! Catpeople, I guess?"

Tomochika was in high spirits as she looked around the town, not taking notice of Yogiri's hurt feelings.

Stone-built houses were lining the stone-paved street and the city's level of civilization didn't appear that low, a little like Europe during its later half of the Renaissance.

"Are those street lights electrical? Maybe they've got outlets to charge at?"

"You and your console. Anyway, about what we should do from here..."

"Whatever we do we should probably do it before nightfall. Did you have something in mind?"

"I think we should start by getting some weapons!"

Tomochika seemed very passionate about her proposal.



They couldn't read the letters of this world, but thanks to the pictures drawn on the shops' signs they could more or less find their way and soon they discovered a weapons dealer.

"Honestly, I don't really see the point of relying on weapons for self-defense."

"But using your power for self-defense basically means killing your target, right?"

"Well, yeah, but getting killed for trying to kill someone is a 'reap what you sow' sort of deal if you ask me."

"Sure, but don't you think people are less likely to come attacking in the first place if they see us carrying weapons?"

"You think? I don't know, doesn't feel like it'd really make a difference."

But since Tomochika was so eager about it he decided to at least give it a try.

The inside of the shop was booming with customers, a clear indicator that this world was dangerous enough for weapons to be in such high demand. All kinds of equipment were on display and everywhere were shoppers inspecting them closely. There was some more in the back of the building, most likely the high-grade items.

Some of the customers were clearly different from humans, ranging from mostly normal looking people with no more than cat ears instead of regular ones to people covered in fur or even scales, far from comparable to humans. They all appeared to coexist in this world.

"How about this?"

Tomochika passed Yogiri a short sword, roughly 30 centimeters in length. It was lighter than he expected and lay well in his hands, but he couldn't say it gave him a feeling of safety.

"If it's for the sake of threat then wouldn't a rougher looking one be better?"

"Yeah, but how are you going to walk around with something like a greatsword? You don't seem the muscle-man kind of guy."

"Well, anything's fine by me."

"Alright, so this one it is!"

Tomochika was oddly enthusiastic about it.

The way she handled the weapons somehow looked like she was used to it. For herself she picked a quarterstaff and a bow.

"The balance is a little, well, hmm. I kind of want to try adding a hazuyari, but that doesn't seem doable without some remodeling..."

(TN: A blade attached to the tip of bows for sake of melee combat.)

Tomochika was lost in grumbling as she fiddled with her bow.

"Sorry to interrupt, but can we even pay without talking their language?"

"I guess we just show him what we want to buy and hand over some money?"

Putting her words into action she went up to the counter, the weapons in hand.

"Excuse me, do you speak Japanese?"

"OK! Understand! Japanese, regular customers!"

You couldn't call him fluent, but it appeared the residents of this world were used to dealing with Japanese.

Tomochika tried guessing an appropriate sum and put it on the counter, but the shopkeeper was visibly surprised. It was probably too much, but since they had more money than they knew what to do with Tomochika urged him to take it. Probably not wanting to rob them of their money he went ahead and added on things like arrowheads and a scabbard to their purchase.

"It's nice that we've got all these weapons now, but aren't bows pretty difficult to handle?"

"Ah, no worries. Used to them."

"Oh, were you part of the archery club?"

"Not a club, but yeah, something like that."

They made their way back outside while talking about their purchase, when suddenly a girl with cat ears walked up to them. It seemed she was waiting for them to finish shopping.

"Are you two Nyapanese? First time seeing you in this city, you wouldn't be looking for a guide, nya?"

They were addressed by someone with fluent Japanese, cat ears and a strange verbal

tic.

CHAPTER 12

IS IT JUST ME, OR ARE ALMOST ALL THE JERKS JAPANESE!?

A creepy girl with the ears of a cat.

Such was Yogiri's first impression.

Her height was close to Tomochika's, not particularly tall, and considering that her vitals were protected by light armor and her hip equipped with a sword she was probably some kind of warrior.

Yogiri recalled having seen her in the weapons dealer shop.

"Wow, your Japanese is so good!"

Tomochika voiced her admiration; she was genuinely impressed, although her amazement was most likely due to the contrast with the catgirl's first impression. Yogiri on the other hand was on guard, thinking that randomly being approached by a stranger was clearly suspicious.

"Of course, nya. Most of the girls in this city are studying it, after all, nya."

"Why's that?"

"For the sake of getting along with Japanese guys, nya! They're known for having good future prospects and being quick to fall in love and marry, nya."

"Is it normal to be this frank!?"

"Everyone's thinking like that, it's not really something to hide, nya."

"But wait, shouldn't it be the same the other way around? The guys we've seen so far haven't been that good at Japanese."

"Japanese girls don't even take notice of commoners, their target's obviously to marry into high society through nobles and princes, nya. Commoners wouldn't stand a chance even if they tried, nya."

"What's with that fixation... Although I guess I can see why they'd be after nobles and stuff."

"So, what did you want?"

Yogiri interrupted them as they were deep in discussion.

"Mhm! I was thinking maybe you could need some help, nya. Of course, this is also for the sake of marriage, nya. But I'm not after guys with girlfriends or anything, I just believe that steadily making new connections and properly spreading the good word about yourself is the secret to success, nya!"

"Ah, I'm not his girlfriend or anything, if that's what you meant. Although I'd still recommend finding someone different instead, he's an oddball. In more ways than one."

"Is he, nya? Doesn't look that bad, nya."

"What made you think it's our first time here?"

It seemed like the conversation was about to derail again, so Yogiri asked her about something he thought suspicious.

"Oh it's written all over your face, nya. Could tell the moment I saw you two, nya."

Yogiri had to admit that was probably the case; the way they stared at all the things they had never seen before most likely made it clear as day. It didn't look like there was any point in trying to fool her.

"You said you wanted to help us out?"

"Right! How about I show you around the city, nya? I'm guessing you only just got here and still don't know where everything is, nya."

"For sake of making connections?"

"That's it, nya."

"What do you think?"

Yogiri asked Tomochika.

The whole situation seemed exceedingly suspicious to him, but even if she was planning to trick them, it didn't look like she was going to do anything right away. Yogiri decided to leave it to Tomochika.

"Let's go along with it, I guess. Honestly, I have no clue what's where in this city."

Finding the weapons dealer could be called a stroke of luck. If there were places they wanted to go, then having a guide with them would speed things up a lot.

"Alright, we'll be relying on you."

"Thank you, nya! My name's Mireille. I'm actually a warrior, but when I'm in the city I'm working hard on finding a husband, nya. May I know your names, nya?"

"Yogiri Takatou."

"I'm Tomochika Dannoura, nice to meet you."

"Yogiri and Tomochika, got it. Nya."

They exchanged a quick round of introductions and Yogiri asked a vital question.

"So, did we actually have any places we needed to visit?"

"Personally I'd like to just see some more of the town before it gets dark."

"In that case how about I first show you around this neighborhood and after that we go eat dinner somewhere, nya?"

And that's what they did.



After browsing a bunch of different shops and even making some purchases they went to a nearby restaurant.

"To think parallel universes were so comfortable! In fact, there's hardly any discomfort at all, what's up with that?"

Tomochika spoke as she ate her evening meal.

The city really was pleasant, appearing as though it had been influenced by Japanese culture in all core aspects of life; clothing, food and housing. So much that even Yogiri and Tomochika felt like they could continue their life normally here. The food they were currently being served wasn't too different from the Japanese dishes they were used to either.

"Only goes for reasonably large cities, nya. After heading out a bit into the country things quickly take a turn for the worse, nya."

"Turn for the worse?"

"Sages don't provide their celestial protection to random villages, nya. And because the villagers are busy defending themselves against the constant monster attacks they don't have time to expand, nya."

This world was swarming with monsters. It was safe in the areas protected by the sages, but outside of them it was dangerous wherever one went.

"Speaking of Sages, were you two not given a gift by them, nya?"

The system that the sages had installed in their classmates was known as "the gift" among this world's natives.

Gifts could be inherited, meaning it was normal for children to receive the same power as their parents.

There were all kinds of them, but the ones bestowed by the sages were considered special, and so were the Japanese for their proficiency in them.

"What makes you think that?"

"It's pretty easy to tell, nya. Even if your analyze level is low, you can still tell whether the other party is strong or not, nya. In your case it's [Major Weak], nya."

This is bad.

Hanakawa had said that seeing other people's status was restricted to people with a high level in their analyze skill, but apparently even with a low level one could tell that Yogiri and Tomochika were weak.

Yogiri could feel his head starting to hurt as he thought of the headaches this would cause down the line.

"Aa! Are you maybe aiming for the Sword Saint's gift instead, nya? Now that would be understandable, nya. Although I think even just entering the Sword Saint's sight is going to be awfully difficult without a gift, nya."

Unable to find a good response Yogiri decided to brush the matter aside and continue his meal.



"Well, I kind of expected it to turn out this way."

Yogiri and Tomochika had found themselves in a back alley's deadend. The entrance to that blind alley was currently being filled by a large number of beastmen; the result of following Mireille's lead after she proposed to lead them to a good place to stay the night.

"Oh so you knew, I see——. Hmmm——, well I'm sorry about that, going along with the kind little catgirl, thinking she was for real here!!"

Tomochika was surprised at first, but soon changed into being sulky instead.

"Well, just goes to show that the world isn't such a nice place, nya."

Mireille stood opposite of them, next to the rest of the beastmen, as if it were only natural.

It was already deep into the night, but thanks to the bright moonlight it was relatively easy for them to make out their attackers.

Before them there were ten beastmen of various gender, age and animal features. Among them stood one human, a man with a weapon he appeared more than used to. He also appeared plenty used to this kind of situation; Yogiri determined he was most likely a habitual criminal.

"Any chance we could talk?"

"Well aren't you gutsy. What do you wanna ask, eh?"

The human, apparently the leader of the gang, took a step forward and replied with mock in his voice. A large frame, black hair and black eyes, around 30 years old. He was covered in an air of violence, and based on his facial features he appeared to be Japanese.

"Are you after our money?"

Mireille seemed to have been interested in their financial standing as she guided them through the city. The fact they were carrying a fortune with them was probably exposed.

"Oh we're certainly going to take care of all your money, but that's not what we're after, not at all. Our top priority are you two ungifted Japanese. You gotta know, as a result of all us Japanese wreaking havoc in this world the nobles hate us big time. But too bad, the Japanese are too strong and there's nothing they can do against them; and

that's where you come into play, that's what ungifted Japanese are useful for: For nobles to vent their anger!"

"Somehow this world is really lacking in people that aren't jerks."

"You say that, but... is it just me, or are almost all the jerks Japanese!?"

Yogiri could only nod in agreement.

"Anyway, I get what you guys are after now. I'm thinking of killing you all for it, still not budging?"

"Hooh? Ahh, don't you worry. We won't be killing you, aight? Then again, death would be a blessing compared to the future ahead of you!"

The leader sneered as he spoke and fell into a mocking laugh as he finished, soon the rest of the gang joined his bellowing.

Yogiri decided to murder them all.

CHAPTER 13

BEFORE WE GET STARTED: EVERYONE IN THE BACK, DIE

"Mireille! We'll forget about this so just pull back! Despite how Takatou-kun looks he's ridiculously strong! You guys don't stand a chance!"

Tomochika knew very well that the people she was talking to weren't the kind to listen to such words, but she couldn't bear just silently watching on.

"Nyanya? Did you think that kind of bluff would work? Gifts are everything. There's nothing you two major weak ungifted can do, nya."

"I've got a high level analyze, aight? We know you two are ungifted, it's a fact!"

As Mireille and the human leader were talking, five of the beastmen circled around them.

Yogiri took note of his opponents' equipment.

Most of them carried swords. Some were bare-handed, possibly magic users. One of them held a net, or rather a rope with weights attached, so their goal was probably to catch them alive.

"Before we get started: everyone in the back, die."

And all at once the five behind them collapsed — first off all he wanted to somewhat half their number.

This was for the sake of experimenting with going easy on opponents.

On their way to this city they discussed Yogiri's usage of his power and while there were many things about it that still troubled Tomochika, she did agree to using it to kill enemies in self-defense.

However, due to the power's overwhelming strength it wasn't particularly flexible, so they tried coming up with a way to go easy on people.

"You, what just..."

Unlike Hanakawa and his group, the gang's leader instantly grasped that it was Yogiri's doing.

Having arrived at that conclusion one's first thought would be to escape, but he and all the beastmen were frozen still. The situation was too strange for them, their instincts couldn't tell them how to react.

The correct course of action would have been to beg for their lives. There was no guarantee of being spared, but it was most likely their best chance at survival; Yogiri had already decided to kill them whether they rushed up to attack or turned around to escape.

Left over were six and Yogiri decided to go through them in order.

"Half die."

He spoke as he pointed at a beastman with the features of a tiger, who dropped to the ground the moment he finished. His intention was to kill only the tigerman's lower half, one of the ideas for going easy on a target.

Yogiri's power was to order any target to die, so perhaps it was possible to make only half a creature his target? For Yogiri, who had never thought about using his power differently, this was uncharted territory.

"AaAAH—— @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ # # #!"

The demitiger screamed in words they didn't understand. He didn't die instantly, but it didn't take long for his voice to stop.

——Well, that was to be expected. Instantly losing half your body sounds pretty fatal.

It was unclear what exactly happened to the beastman's anatomy, but apparently halving him was overdoing it. Yogiri decided to pinpoint his target further.

"Right ankle."

He released his power at a sheeplike demihuman, but blundered. He wasn't able to focus his power that precisely, possibly due to a lack of practice, and his target suffered instant death.

"Left arm."

His next target had a leopard's face. It worked, but once again his target died soon after.

A sudden occurrence of medical dysfunction in one's left arm: There may be people capable of surviving it, but some might just die from the shock.

"Not working too well compared to just going all out..."

Yogiri mumbled as he began considering simply killing them without further thought.

"Eyeball."

He used his power on a canine beastman, and was successful.

It was a more precise target than an ankle, but perhaps its independence as an organ made it an easier mark.

"OooOO! @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @!"

The dogman writhed on the ground with his hand covering his eye.

"Nose, ears."

Yogiri continued to use his power on the beastman. If he possessed the same properties as a dog then first his sense of smell and hearing should be eliminated.

His ears and nose also died as intended. However, killing three of the five senses could hardly be called a success as far as going easy on people went.

"Wh-what the! What in the world nyare you!"

Mireille fell into panic.

Before she knew it their number was reduced to three: the Japanese leader, Mireille the catgirl and a lizardlike demihuman of indistinguishable gender.

One of them released killing intent.

It seemed the reptilian demihuman was about to make a move, but Yogiri's counter activated and the attempt was thwarted by instant death.

Two left.

"Does it matter? No point in explaining."

Different from their encounter with Hanakawa, this time it wasn't necessary to collect information. Consequently, there was no need to explain for sake of threatening them.

Yogiri looked to his side.

Tomochika made a pained expression, but didn't try to stop him. It looked like she was prepared to carry the feelings of remorse.

"H-help! Please save me! I-I was forced to work for this Japanese! I have little brothers at home waiting for me with empty stomachs! M-my father went off somewhere with some woman, and my mother is ill with high fever! I had to make money somehow!"

Her verbal tic seemed to have only been an act for the sake of gaining the attraction of men; she must have judged that continuing to use it in this situation would only achieve the opposite effect instead.

The correct course of action. Yogiri had long been tired of her sly nya this nya that.

"Is that so?"

"Y-yes! It's true! So please——"

His reaction gave her a sliver of hope. She quickly separated from her former leader and started walking up to the two sage candidates.

"And you thought that'd justify mugging people and selling them off?"

But hearing that, all hope drained from Mireille's face and revealed despair in its place. Her legs froze.

"You, just what are you... an ungifted shouldn't..."

The leader's face was twisted by terror as he stumbled backwards.

"It does feel like I'm getting somewhere with this, but it sure is inefficient. Not really seeing any benefits either."

All he achieved was terrorizing them, which wasn't his goal at all.

"W-we're both Japanese, aren't we? Aye? Come on, spare me, eh? This is the only way to survive in this world!"

"Would you mind not lumping me in with you?"

In the end, these kinds of people don't reflect on their actions; they'd just repeat their crimes. Nothing good would come from letting them live.

"Die."

He used his power on both of them. Even if it wasn't his taste, the experiment had to be completed.

But nothing happened.

"Hah, haha! A misfire, ain't it!"

"Quick, now!"

Both of them dashed away, driven by panic.

"Huh? Wait, is it fine to let them get away!?"

Tomochika didn't want to encourage Yogiri's killing, but she still understood the risk of letting them run.

"I'm not letting them get away, though?"

Yet they continued to run at full speed and soon escaped into the maze of alleys.



Mireille ran for her life.

She lowered her posture all the way to running on all fours and made full use of her body as she dashed over the stone paving.

"Hey! Don't run ahead——!"

The leader shouted something, but Mireille paid him no heed. Under no circumstances would she stop and wait for him or anyone.

She turned through more alleys than she could count, kicked walls to climb, dashed over roofs and continued to flee. Only after she was convinced of having taken more than enough distance did she stop her flight.

She settled to rest on who knows which building's roof, but because she exerted her body to its absolute limit her heartbeat wouldn't calm down.

"Wh-what the hell..... was that monster..."

It was entirely beyond her understanding.

Yogiri spoke little more than single words, but each time he did, one of her comrades would collapse as if a joke. The sight was too absurd for her sense of reality to keep up, but that only intensified the feeling that death was coming down upon them against all reason.

They should have been mere worthless ungifted.

Without any power whatsoever, an existence below even slaves in this world.

On top of that, they were incredibly rare Japanese ungifted.

When she saw them at the weapons shop Mireille blessed her luck.

It was all supposed to end after capturing them, taking their money and selling them to some nobles.

Yet why did it turn out this way?

No matter how she looked at it, she couldn't accept reality.

But it didn't matter anymore.

She escaped. A reason for joy, Mireille thought.

—First, wait for your senses to calm down.

She had made up her mind, but that was when she noticed that her surroundings were far too silent.

There was no sound at all.

It didn't take long for her to realize what it meant and a shiver of fear to tear through her.

Her heartbeat that throbbed in panic only a few moments ago was now barely noticeable.

"a..."

She groaned, but hardly made a noise before she ran out of air. She could no longer breathe.

Her heart was coming to a halt.

Her vision was rapidly turning black.

In desperation she stretched out her claws, scratched at the roof as if to take hold of reality, but her actions served no purpose.

Slowly, the strength she could gather dwindled, and consciousness faded.

...approaching them was a mistake.....

Before long, Mireille quietly ceased to live.



"I think I mentioned it on our way here, but my power is irreversible. After activating

it there's no way to stop it, the target always dies."

"Hm, you did say that."

"But as for how long it takes the target to die there's some leeway. Well, it can't really be called going easy on someone, but I've barely used it so I went ahead and gave it a test."

"Which means..."

"They should be dying somewhere right about now."

From Yogiri's standpoint all he did was deal with a criminal before the criminal dealt with them.

Tomochika understood where he was coming from, but she didn't appear happy about just calling it settled like that.

"Anyway, let's get away from here. Even without evidence, we wouldn't want to be seen in such a scene."

"Right, true! If someone were to see us here we'd totally look like criminals, wouldn't we!"

The sooner they got away from here the better.

So they thought as they were about to walk out of the alley, when suddenly a figure appeared to block their path.

"Halt."

The sudden stranger spoke Japanese and ordered them to stop in a stern voice.

"What might be the matter?"

Yogiri did as he was told and returned a question.

"I am a guard. I have some questions regarding this situation."

A female knight cut off their exit. Given the soldiers on standby behind her she was most likely a troop leader.

"Then I'm afraid we can't help you. We got lost in these alleys and when we got here it already looked like this."

He looked around him while calmly answering her.

"That's a lie."

The guard scoffed at his words and continued.

"I would know, because I witnessed it all from start to finish."

So she declared with ample confidence.

"Now we really are being seen as the criminals!"

And Tomochika's lament was loud and clear.

CHAPTER 14

NO WAY I'D STAY WITH A GUY GOING ON ABOUT LOVE HOTELS

"Actually, wait a second! Aren't guards supposed to protect public order!?"

"Yes, and?"

The troop leader answered Tomochika with the same confidence as before.

Blonde hair, blue eyes and sharp facial features; certainly not Japanese, but fluent in the language nonetheless.

"So you saw what happened! We were about to get kidnapped, why didn't you interfere!?"

"That would be what you call a small sacrifice before a great cause. It seems you don't have an eye for the bigger picture of things! We were investigating a crime syndicate to get the nobles connected to it."

"So you wanted to track where we would be sold off to?"

Yogiri made sure to speak in a polite tone. There was no reason to needlessly resist, after all.

"Exactly! Even if we had captured them here, they wouldn't have disclosed who they're dealing with. We'd know, because we've repeated that mistake over and over already!"

"Takatou-kun... This world really does lack decent people..."

He could only agree, although he was thinking the woman was more of a blockhead than a bad person. Randomly disclosing investigation results, bragging about them even, couldn't be normal.

"Well, then it's a shame they all started mysteriously dying. May we leave now?"

Yogiri played innocent.

It would have been easy to kill them all, but the guards held governmental authority. If they could just talk themselves through this situation then that would be for the best.

"That's precisely it! Based on what it looked like they all began dying on the spot, indeed. Most mysterious. And that's why asking you two, the ones that saw it all from close up, would be the quickest route to the root of things."

"Aren't you worried it might have been our doing? Getting too close in that case would be dangerous, wouldn't it?"

Yogiri wasn't a fan of unnecessarily digging too deep into things, but he thought it strange and asked her about it.

"Of course, the possibility that you two are responsible for this is certainly there. You are the ones that were about to be abducted, after all. However! We possess the celestial protection of saints! The gifts of Japanese, those bestowed to them by the sages, do not work on us! How do you like that! I can tell by your look you didn't know that, did you? Hmmm? Has your anxiety finally caught up with youuu?"

She smirked, convinced that she successfully drove the two sage candidates into a corner.

Since the source of the candidates' gifts were the sages it would only make sense for them to also have a way to suppress the gifts bestowed by them. There was most likely quite a number of Japanese with the sages' gifts, which would indeed raise a need for the protectors of public order to have immunity against them.

—Meaning, opposing the sages with powers given by them would be difficult, huh.

Yogiri started to feel like he could understand the general gist of things.

Sages summon sage candidates and give them the task of producing a new sage from among them. Those new sages then summon new candidates themselves, and the

cycle repeats. There most likely existed a hierarchy where those of lower rank could impossibly defy those of higher rank.

"Er, no. No anxiety here. Not like we have gifts in the first place."

"What!? Oi, George! Analyze them!"

"Understood. — Indeed, they do not possess gifts. I don't see any traces of magic around here either, so the possibility of them having done anything is low, I would say."

The man right behind the female knight answered. He, too, spoke natural Japanese.

"How can this be!?"

She flared up at Yogiri, who wasn't particularly distraught.

"No point in asking me, I have no clue either."

"Then why did you lie! Doesn't that just make you suspicious!?"

"I only wanted to avoid being questioned for an explanation on the situation. Sorry, but we don't know what happened here ourselves. Even if we had told you the people around us started collapsing and dying out of nowhere, wouldn't that have been difficult to believe?"

"Damn it! Fine, whatever! Everyone, get to work! We have to examine their bodies!"

Peevish like a child the guardswoman took her subordinates along to the back of the blind alley.

"Sorry about that, you two. A surprise interrogation like that must have been unpleasant. But trust me, the commander's not a bad person. She just has a, well, really bad case of tunnel vision."

The man called George remained next to Yogiri and apologized to them.

"No problem, now that the misunderstanding has been cleared up. This is a question purely out of curiosity, but you were planning on letting us be kidnapped, right?"

"It pains me to address it so bluntly, but yes, we concluded that you wouldn't be killed immediately, and with that in mind we were going to carry out our investigation."

So he answered, looking even more apologetic than before.

"Well, we were saved in the end so I guess it's fine."

"Ah, but I'm afraid we can't let you go home right away. May I trouble you to come along to headquarters and fill out an eyewitness report?"

"Sure. Oh, and not to ask for it as a recompense, but could you introduce us to a place to stay the night? We were actually supposed to be taken to a hotel when we ended up here instead."

"Certainly, that's fine."

"Hey! One's alive! A dogman!"

The troop leader yelled as if she made a scientific breakthrough.

The only survivor from going easy on them.

—Best to kill him before any problems arise.

Or so Yogiri thought, but then again, in a way the dogman was the fruit of his labor. And so, for sake of commemoration, he decided to leave him as is.



After finishing the paperwork Yogiri and Tomochika were let go without any issues.

He was worried that the request for an eyewitness report was only a facade to arrest them, but luckily that wasn't the case.

The people of this world held absolute faith in gifts; him and Tomochika didn't possess any, so they were hardly even considered suspects.

They were told about several places they could stay at and decided to go with the highest class one among them.

A cheap hotel might not only be unsanitary but also a hotspot for crime, and since they had more money than they could burn through they both agreed not to be stingy.

"Ooooh! Wow, this is great! It's like a castle! Although not like I've ever been in one!"

Tomochika expressed her surprise upon entering the hotel, even throwing in a quip. The lobby was bright as if it was day, with all kinds of glowing and sparkling things. One could tell that the furniture was high class at a glance, and yet it was modest enough to maintain a feeling of harmony. The cleaning staff must have been extremely thorough, there didn't seem to be a speck of dirt nor dust.

"Doesn't this feel sort of like a love hotel?"

"Huh... Wait, have you been to one!?"

Tomochika's surprise went up a notch.

"I got to stay there for a while once, had a similar feeling to it."

"Having heard that, this whole atmosphere suddenly feels super cheap!"

"So, how about the room? Should we share one?"

High class as the hotel may be, this was still a different world and one never knew what might happen. As far as safety went Yogiri was thinking that staying together would be for the best.

"Nuh-uh——. No way I'd stay with a guy going on about love hotels——"

"Alright, let's go with neighboring rooms then."

He wasn't that serious when proposing it, and a neighboring room should be good

enough to let him protect her.

They went up to the desk and booked their rooms. There was no problem with getting a room in Japanese, most likely thanks to the high class nature of the hotel. Finally, they agreed to meet back up in the lobby the next morning.



After splitting up into their respective rooms Tomochika was alone.

Her room was plenty well-lit. Magic or electricity, one of the two seemed to allow regulating the light at will. It was a single room, but nonetheless spacious and full of pomp. The bed was huge, more than enough room for both her and Yogiri.

"Geez, what am I even thinking."

Currently, Tomochika was completely reliant on Yogiri; without him she most likely wouldn't have come this far.

In that regard she was truly thankful.

As such, she thought that it would have been difficult to tell him off if he were to approach her under these circumstances.

"But still, what is he thinking anyway—-. Wonder if he actually has interest in me—-. Or is it really just my boobs—-"

If such a situation actually arose all of a sudden she would be rather hesitant about it, but, just maybe, after taking the proper steps...

Tomochika couldn't deny there were feelings like that, but that sentimental mood was blown away in a heartbeat. Someone was in her room.

"Who's there!?"

Whoever it was, he or she was floating in mid-air.

Immediately running out of the room and calling for Yogiri would have been the smartest choice, but Tomochika was too dazed to react. Not out of fear, but because she recognized that person.

A fat girl in a kimono, who was far from just being familiar to Tomochika.

"Sis!?"

The girl before her had the same face as someone Tomochika was used to seeing nearly every day of her life, her older sister.

CHAPTER 15

MY GUARDIAN SPIRIT IS THE STRONGEST

Tomochika was dumbfounded upon seeing her older sister floating about in her hotel room.

That alone was already strange, but on top of that her sister was currently in a different world.

"It's you... right?"

Could it be that she had been summoned as well?

Did she die and turn into a ghost?

Or had she finally acquired the mastery of floating in the air?

Tomochika viewed any explanation she could come up with as plausible; her sister, Chihara Dannoura, was just that far beyond the confines of common sense.

[Would you please not compare me to such a person!]

The voice resounded within Tomochika's head.

She may have been told not to compare the two, but Tomochika couldn't think of the voice as any other than her sister's.

"Nonono, there's no way you aren't my sister. I've got some decent confidence there's no other living being that high up on the weirdness scale, okay?"

A small but wide frame, far surpassing "plump" and entering the territory of "round," that was her sister. With even just her silhouette being enough to identify her at once, for Tomochika to mistake her was unthinkable.

[You shall call me Mekomoko Dannoura! Wife of the son of the founder of the Dannoura-Style, called the rejuvenator of the Dannoura dynasty and the guardian deity of House Dannoura; your ancestor, your ever-watchful spirit and your guardian

angel!]

"Could you not cram everything into one sentence!? I can't even throw in a retort! Let's see, the son's rep, rejuvenator of the dynasty... just how badly did our family stagnate since then!?"

[Tsk tsk. Absolutely hopeless! You tried, but that was no good at all!]

"Did I just get scolded by a ghost!?"

And Tomochika realized: maybe she wasn't talking to her sister after all.

Her sister was the silly act to her straight-man act, she would never complain about the quality of Tomochika's jokes.

"So... you aren't actually my sister?"

[I'm Mokomoko Dannoura!]

"And you're here why?"

If she was her guardian angel then wasn't she supposed to stay hidden from her?

[Certainly, as your spiritual protector my role is only to stay with you and fend off evil spirits. However, with a situation this much of a mess I can hardly stay idle and watch, so I decided to actively help. But why talk while standing, feel free to set your bags aside and take a seat.]

"Um, thanks, I'll do that."

Technically Mokomoko should have just been a suspicious stranger to Tomochika, but she felt it oddly difficult to oppose her. Maybe it was due to the reminiscence to her sister, but Mokomoko didn't really give off the feeling of a stranger.

Tomochika put her bags on the floor and sat down on the bed.

"Is it fine if I ask a couple questions?"

[Ask whatever you wish!]

"Why did you wait this long to show yourself? Haven't there been several situations you could have helped out in already?"

[I was waiting for you to be alone. That youngster with you is seriously scary!]

"Youngster? Oh, Takatou-kun?"

[Right. If I showed up out of nowhere I might have been erased on the spot, so, well, I'd appreciate it if you could tell him about my existence as soon as tomorrow.]

"I can do that, but... you're a ghost, right? Can Takatou-kun even kill you?"

Yogiri's power was certainly incredible, but could it be used on something vague like a ghost? Tomochika had her doubts.

[As a decently high ranking divine spirit myself I can instinctively tell when things are trouble, and that youngster is triggering that instinct big time.]

"Hm, alright then, I'll talk with him and you should be fine. So next, what was that about coming to my help?"

[Mhm, indeed. If I were to put it like a title of one of those recently popular web novels, it would be something like 「My Guardian Spirit Is the Strongest, So Even the Other World Is a Cakewalk!」]

"I have no clue what you mean with that roundabout of an explanation!"

It was an odd way to put it for a ghost of the Heian era.

(TN: Heian era: 794-1185)

[Well, as you can gather from what I said I'm a purely spiritual entity. I can't assist you in a physical manner, so my helping will be mostly limited to spiritual protection. As a

matter of fact, I've already started doing so. Remember that time with the system or whatever? I'm the one that stopped it from installing.]

"Aha! So it was you! What are you doing going around tinkering with things!"

[Oh? Did you actually want something that obscure?]

Tomochika didn't have an answer.

If the system's install had succeeded her classmates wouldn't have abandoned her, but would that really have been for the best?

[Frankly, I wouldn't recommend getting that thing. It's designed for battle, just by having it installed one's readiness to fight increases, one's fear of death decreases and one's aversion to manslaughter is numbed. You're basically turned into a battle junkie.]

"Huh... my classmates didn't look that different."

[Maybe not at first, but the change proceeds gradually. After all, only those fit for battle can survive in this world.]

"Does that mean the other ones the system didn't install for also had some kind of guardian?"

[No clue about the rest. I'm the only guardian spirit that came along to this world.]

There's no way to find out at this point, but there might have been a reason the install failed for the others.

"You said something about being the guardian deity of the Dannoura-Style earlier, but then why are you with me? Wouldn't Chihara be a better fit?"

Her older sister Chihara Dannoura was the just successor of the Dannoura-Style, so if there was someone to watch over as guardian deity then it should have been her, Tomochika thought.

[That one's no good as a successor, too weak. Which is why I need you to live on and return to our world.]

"I'd love to go home, trust me, but right now all I'm doing is rely on Takatou-kun for that, really..."

The Dannoura-Style of archery.

A style of the Heian era that combined the use of weapons and hand-to-hand combat, taught on in House Dannoura ever since, until the present day. Tomochika was familiar with it, but in a world with dragons, magic and special skills she didn't see much use in regular martial arts.

[Indeed, even if you were reasonably proficient in the Dannoura-Style, you wouldn't get very far with it. As such! I shall teach you: the True Dannoura-Style!]

Mokomoko broke into a smug laugh and Tomochika started to get a bad feeling.



Tomochika's exhaustion could be read from her face when she arrived in the lobby.

"Morning. Couldn't sleep?"

Yogiri spoke with a refreshed face, the fact he had a great sleep written all over it.

"Ah, well, there were some distractions. So, what's the plan for today? Gathering information to catch up with the rest of the class?"

For now their objective was to regroup with their classmates, who were currently on the way to the royal capital, so their first step should be to investigate the routes for traveling there.

"Right, about that. I already took some measures in that regard."

"Huh? When?"

"Last night."

"Wait, did you go out and about all by yourself!?"

"Nah, nothing like that. I asked the person over there, a concierge."

Yogiri pointed to a woman in a suit on the other end of the lobby.

When Tomochika looked over there the lady made a light bow.

A flawless beauty, and without really knowing why Tomochika felt overwhelmed.

"She looked into our classmates' whereabouts, told me several ways to get there ourselves, prepared us an item that'll allow us to bypass the language barrier and even came up with a way to charge my console."

"That concierge is so capable there's nothing left for us to do!"

Almost all the problems they had been racking their brains over were solved in a single night by the stunning concierge.

CHAPTER 16

OF COURSE YOU'D BE ABLE TO MAKE A CHARGER

Yogiri and Tomochika sat down at one of the meeting corners in the hotel's lobby. Opposite of them sat the concierge and rolled out on the table lay a map.

"My name is Celestina, concierge at this hotel."

"Ah, right, hello."

Since Tomochika tagged along Celestina introduced herself anew.

"Now, the distance from this city, Kuenza, to Valeria, the royal capital, is roughly 140 kilometers. To put it into more familiar terms, it's about the distance from Osaka to Nagoya."

"That's so easy to understand it's baffling again!"

But that was the fluently Japanese speaking Celestina for you, being familiar with the geography of Japan may have been to be expected.

"Osaka and Nagoya, huh. I wonder which would be the royal capital?"

(TN: A Japanese history reference.)

"Takatou-kun! Could you not raise such an ominous allusion!"

"There's quite a lot of ground to be covered until you arrive at the capital, but I have been told that your classmates are traveling on foot. Since their side objective is to gather experience and raise their levels on their way, I suspect them to pass through the ancient woodlands of Hakua."

Yogiri took a look at the map.

If they were to head to the capital in a straight line they would have to go through the Hakua old-growth forest, the Garla canyon and the Meldo plains.

However, there was no way from them to tell where on that route their classmates currently were.

While Yogiri was in thought like that, Celestina showed them several sheets of paper.

"Here's a chart of the monsters of Hakua with their respective habitats, and here's an encounter rate, calculated by considering the monsters' ecological habits. The levels of the sage candidates may be low, but they're still stronger than regular fighters; keeping that in mind and accounting for their probable time spent resting I believe them to be somewhere around this area."

Celestina pointed at the map, upon which a symbol appeared about halfway through the ancient woodlands of Hakua.

It seemed to be around 20 kilometers away from Kuenza, less than Tomochika expected.

"Oh? They didn't get further than that in one day?"

"The forest of Hakua is a dangerous region, this group could be called rather quick."

"And it seems we've got multiple options for catching up to them, but the one Celestina recommends is to go by train."

Yogiri, who had already heard the story, added on to the explanation.

"Indeed. By making a detour around the Hakua forest by train and getting off at the Hayabusa station, located between Hakua and the Garla canyon, you should be able to get ahead of your classmates. The only problem with this route is that should your classmates face unexpected difficulties and change their course it would be difficult to catch up to them. In that regard it would be better to follow them on the route they passed through themselves. If you were to gather information as you advanced catching up to them should be fairly easy. However, entering Hakua as just the two of you would be quite reckless, I recommend first gathering companions and preparing various equipment for this route."

"Personally I'd be fine with going by train. If we don't manage to group up with them on the way then we can just head to the capital, sooner or later they'll get there as well. Also, chasing after them sounds like a pain."

"Why do I feel like 'sounds like a pain' is your main reasoning?"

The conversation stopped for a moment and Celestina placed two bits of paper on the desk.

"Here are two train tickets bound for the capital, valid today."

"How do you even have these at hand!?"

"This hotel reserves train seats at all times."

If they had requested travel companions and equipment she would probably also have provided them in a heartbeat, Yogiri thought.

And so traveling discussions were settled for now and Celestina moved on to the next topic, placing two necklaces on the table.

"Since Takatou-sama said not to worry about money it turned out a little expensive, but here are the requested necklaces. They are magical items that instantly translate languages, but even so, trusting them completely isn't to be recommended either, so I suggest consulting these as well."

So she spoke as she put two books on the table.

On a side note, all the items Celestina was bringing forth had been stored on a shelf behind here.

"They are dictionaries for this world's language and Japanese. Pronunciation is described with katakana, they should be helpful for studying. I could give you lessons in the language, but sadly time only allows for this much, my apologies."

"No-no, no need to apologize——"

Tomochika was a little taken aback by Celestina's deep bow of her head.

"Next, these rings will allow you to hide your status, customized in a way that makes them display one that shouldn't cause any problems.

As she spoke she placed two rings on the table. They had a simple design and were silver in color.

"Normally they only display a single fake status, but taking your position into consideration I decided to apply a two-layer disguise. Under regular circumstances you will appear to have the status of a commoner, and should that status be seen through a sage candidate's status will be displayed."

"I see, so we'll be pretending to be sage candidates pretending to be commoners, huh. And when that first disguise is seen through we'll just look all the more convincing."

"Although the first disguise won't be breached that easily, I dare say."

"Hearing Celestina-san say that with so much confidence makes it feel like it might as well be impossible to crack..."

"You can also change which status is currently being displayed at will. Tapping the ring three times in succession will make it flash in red light and change to the status of a sage candidate, another three taps will make it flash in green light and return to the commoner status."

A particularly doubtful person might see through both layers or tell them to remove their rings, but if they were ever doubted that much then they were probably seen through from the start.

Where these rings would really show their worth was in letting them avoid being approached by random thugs in cities like last time.

"And finally, this."

She placed something square-shaped on the table.

Whatever it was, its sides were roughly 15 centimeters in length, its material was metal and attached to it was a crank.

"Since I don't specialize in industrial design it turned into such an awkward form, I apologize."

"Huh? What's that? Something you made?"

"Quite so. Turning this crank generates electricity. Please use this cable to connect your gaming console to it."

"Sigh... Of course you'd be able to make a charger..."

Tomochika was both astonished and dumbfounded.

"Magnets are easy enough to acquire, so making it generate electricity wasn't that difficult of a task. The problem was matching the electric power's standard and adjusting the power output. Condensing it to such a size was the limit of a single night."

Some slight frustration could be felt in the way she seemed to want to add on that she could have made it even more compact if only she had more time.

"How'd you get this cable?"

The cable appeared to be pre-made, so Yogiri asked about it. Indeed, even in Celestina's case, making a PVC cable and a fitting connector in a single night didn't seem doable.

"Due to the summonings there are some Japanese products circulating in this world, although quite limited in quantity. Finding a charger itself would have been the quickest, but sadly I wasn't able to. However, instead I was able to acquire various different pieces with which I was able to create a finished product after all. Pardon me, but would it be possible to attain your satisfaction with this substitute?"

Despite her usually impeccable appearance, here she showed a hint of unease.

"This is more than enough, thank you."

Yogiri gave her his most genuine thanks, which she received with a smile.

The previous night he had decided to try asking the concierge for help, but he would have never thought that she would go this far for them.

"I heard that concierges never say 'no,' but to think it was the same in different worlds..."

Tomochika, despite still being slightly shocked, voiced her admiration while Yogiri quickly put on a ring and necklace. When he was about to put the charger into his rucksack he saw that it was already full with treasure. Without hesitating he took out the valuables and made place for the charger.

"Oi, Takatou-kun, what are you doing?"

"There's not enough room, okay? Actually, hm... Celestina, can we let you take care of this?"

"Certainly. I shall handle it with responsibility."

It was quite the fortune, but Celestina didn't seem bothered in the slightest.

"Can we really leave this much behind? I mean, I'm still carrying some, but still."

"I didn't take out all of it, we should be fine. Ah, right. Since we're leaving it with you, could we ask you to invest it?"

Yogiri spontaneously thought of it and decided to ask her. Somehow he felt like Celestina would be able to raise a profit.

"Are you certain? One can never guarantee success in such financial matters."

"It's fine even if you lose it, we'll be leaving it all to you."

"Takatou-kun, even a concierge has their limits, you can't just ask her to——"

"Understood."

"You won't say 'no' even to that!?"

Even Yogiri, who only asked on a whim, was surprised.

CHAPTER 17

THE EYEBALL'S BESIDES THE POINT

While Yogiri and Tomochika were departing by train at noon, George of the first guardian unit and Edelgard, the leader thereof, arrived at the feudal lord's castle.

At its top there was a wide open area, where him, Edelgard and the feudal lord were currently awaiting a guest. The two guards were in their military uniforms, not wearing their regular armors, whereas the feudal lord was clad in most extravagant clothing.

"I know this is about what happened last night, but did we really have to call for a Sage because of it?"

Edelgard only had the now lost trace to the still hidden background syndicate in mind. Despite how cautious the criminals usually were, they finally got careless when they jumped at the ungifted Japanese, but in the end the guards weren't able to find any useful clues once more.

"Well, isn't there the possibility for it to be that important of a matter? After all, a whole group of people died right before our eyes, yet we don't even know why or how."

George was at his wit's end.

As turned out during their investigation, ten people were victims of the mysterious death. Calling it a major incident wouldn't be too unreasonable.

"Even though the ones that died were random thugs of some provincial city?"

"Isn't it less about who died and more about how they died? We might be dealing with some kind of infectious disease or poisonous gas here, I wouldn't be surprised if one of those responsible for governing this world, namely a Sage, showed interest in the matter."

"Mhm, I still doubt a Sage would concern themselves over it. Then again, no point in

trying to think it through; not like we could ever grasp a Sage's thoughts!"

Edelgard threw out her chest as she spoke, although the reason she said it in such a bragging manner was beyond George.

"You guys, don't act up in front the sage, aight?"

The feudal lord warned them.

Incidentally, as far as hierarchy went there was no leader-subordinate relation between feudal lords and guard soldiers. Reason for that was the guardians' task of keeping Japanese individuals in check, which meant that the feudal lords among the sage acolytes, who were Japanese, could very well turn into targets for investigation.

"Say, weren't we two the only ones ordered to be present?"

"Hey now, if a sage's gonna pay a visit to my castle then obviously I gotta be around to welcome them."

"Hmph. Is that so, eh."

The discussion stopped and the mood turned sour, but that didn't last long. Soon a floating disk appeared in the sky above them.

Because the sages resided on top of the floating continent, this was their usual means of transportation.

The silver disk landed on the roof, its hatch opened and a woman in a deep red dress exited the vessel.

Sage Lain. She held the title of the Great Sage's great-grandchild as well as the responsibility for this city and its surrounding area.

"I appreciate the reception."

Lain received their welcome with an arrogant air and walked up to the feudal lord.

"Been a while, hasn't it, Masahiko? Everything going well?"

"It's been a while, indeed, Lain-sama. Yes, there are no problems."

It seemed like Lain and the feudal lord, Masahiko, knew each other from their time as sage candidates.

"And you're Edelgard? I read the report. Take me to the survivor."

"Yes, ma'am! He was already moved to this castle."

Edelgard answered with a salute and lead Lain inside.



After entering the castle they all changed location to a room with only a simple bed, on top of it a beastman bound by rope.

The sole survivor of the previous night's incident.

There were no external injuries, but his eyes, nose and ears no longer served their purpose. As such, there was no way for them to question him.

The sage requested to see this beastman, so George and Edelgard relocated him to the castle.

Lain walked up to the dogman and inspected him with interest.

"Hmm, no issues as far as looking at him tells me."

Lain went ahead and pulled up his eyelid. The eye was fine, not squashed, crushed or anything alike.

Even so, when she made him face the light that was pouring in from the window there was no reaction whatsoever.

"Indeed. We applied medical treatment for sake of questioning him, but there weren't really any signs of healing."

"In the report I read that healing magic proved ineffective as well?"

"Correct."

Having heard George's answer, Lain moved the finger that had been pulling up the eyelid and shoved it into the eye socket.

"Sage-sama!?"

"I'm the kind of person that's not convinced until they've taken a closer look themselves."

The dogman squirmed on the bed and raised a voice of anguish. His reaction wasn't surprising; Lain was literally pulling out his eyeball.

"Quiet."

That word alone was enough to make the dogman stop moving. His ears shouldn't have been able to hear, and yet his body went stiff; perhaps he could feel the terror with his skin.

Lain tore the eyeball off the optic nerve and held it before her eyes.

She took a long hard look, but it was no more than a regular eyeball.

"Doesn't look too unusual. Masahiko, you feeling like giving a new eye a try?"

"O-, oi! Please spare me with such jokes."

The feudal lord's face went pale for a moment, but it looked like he realized it was a joke right away. Surely those words weren't actually an order.

And yet, he couldn't exactly breathe a sigh of relief. Even if she was joking this time, her mood may just change at any time.

"Anyway, the eyeball's besides the point. Let's move on to the real deal. Heal."

She threw away the eyeball and casted healing magic on the beastman.

Change occurred in the empty socket right away: from one moment to the next a new eyeball appeared.

Indeed, the sage's incredible magic power made the dogman's eyeball regenerate in an instant.

However, the new pupil seemed just as empty as the previous one, void of any reflection.

"Doesn't look like he can see. So despite his organ making a full recovery, its function is still lost. Interesting. Let's try this then."

Lain raised the corners of her mouth, upon which her canines grew longer.

Right after, she sunk her teeth into the beastman's neck.

"What are you doing, Sage-sama!"

Lain's sudden action gave Edelgard a shock.

"Sage Lain-sama is a vampire, were you not aware?"

"But wasn't she completely fine back on the roof!"

Vampires were of the undead, which meant that the sun weakened them. This was common knowledge in their world.

"Lain-sama's class is Origin Blood. The highest rank among undeads, also called Queen of Unlife and Immortal Empress. It goes without saying that such a person wouldn't be bothered by the sun."

"Ooh, you sure know your stuff! And here I thought the Sages' amazingness was only in their magic."

While Edelgard was getting over her surprise the vampire had finished her deed and separated from the neck.

The dogman's body began changing right away.

His nails started growing, his muscles began bulging and his lips gave way to the long canines characteristic for vampires.

When he moved his limbs about, the rope that was supposed to restrain him ripped just like that. He rolled over and fell off the bed.

"Kneel."

Lain commanded the beastman at her feet.

In response, her new underling flapped his limbs, but that was all. It appeared he could tell that he had been given an order and was desperately trying to fulfil it, but he had no way of knowing what kind of order it actually was. At least, that's what it looked like to George.

"So even turning him into my blood won't do. Now that's funny, not even telepathy is working."

Vampires are creatures that turn people into their followers by sucking their blood, which normally made communication through telepathy possible, but even that was being cancelled in the beastman's case.

"Oh well, now he's one of my followers. Do you mind if I take him with me?"

"T-that will be fine, certainly."

Edelgard gave her agreement.

Hearing that, George was relieved. He was worried they might end up stuck with their suspect in his current condition.

"I have to say, this guy has turned into quite an interesting state. The ones responsible for this are the two Japanese by the names of Yogiri Takatou and Tomochika Dannoura, correct?"

"No, well, since they're ungifted we doubt there is anything they could have done, really."

"What kind of idiot are you, Edelgard? Ten people died and those two were the only ones present. Who else are you telling me to suspect?"

"O-of course, that's certainly true, but even so we have absolutely no clue how to proceed under that assumption. We can't lock them away without evidence."

While Edelgard replied, George prepared himself for death.

Actually, it was most likely the same for Edelgard, but despite that she didn't resort to petty excuses.

There were things that were beyond her understanding. She wasn't the kind of shrewd person to try hiding that simple truth.

"I suppose I said some tasteless things there, pardon me. Regarding those two candidates, I actually already heard about them."

Seeing Lain's smug grin, George calmed his heart, realizing his life was no longer in jeopardy, and Edelgard replied.

"Is that so?"

"One of sage Sion's acolytes, Youichi Sudou, contacted me. Apparently those two killed humans and a dragon with instant death magic, or at least something that seemed like it. The whole story sounded more than a little ambiguous, but it did spark my interest. That was also when I received your report."

"I see. How should we proceed in dealing with the two ungifted then?"

"Mhm, about that——"

Lain was about to say something, but neither of the guards were able to hear it to the end.

A blaring roar blasted through the room and made the castle tremble.

George fell into panic, Edelgard clung onto him and both of them were thrown to the floor, where they rolled about until they bumped into a corner of the room.

"What in the world just—"

George voiced his confusion as he rose to his feet, no idea what just happened.

"There!"

Edelgard pointed to the entrance of the room, where a man was standing in the pose of having just swung his sword, excellently transitioned into a stance with no openings.

The floor at that man's feet had formed cracks.

Difficult to believe as it may be, the earlier earthquake appeared to have been the aftermath of that swordsman's step-in.

One half of the door, which had been perfectly split in half, fell to the floor with a thump. However, the man's sword had cleanly chopped in half not only the door, but the whole room: A red line ran through Lain, vertically and exactly through her middle.

That the sword shouldn't have been able to reach that far was undeniable, but George couldn't interpret the scene as anything other than the sudden attacker having cut Lain into two pieces.

"Hero..."

George had analyzed him right away.

"What!?"

"I performed analyze, it's the result! Don't ask me who it is, but he has the Hero class!"

Surprise, shock and awe were written all over the two guards' faces as they witnessed the Hero's sudden appearance.

CHAPTER 18

MOKOMOKO-SAN IS WATCHING

A bizarre scene unfolded before George, Edelgard and Masahiko.

At a single glance it appeared to be a battle between two super humans, carried out at a speed untraceable to the naked eye of a regular person.

However, the strange thing was the one-sidedness of the battle, and in particular the way it seemed to be far from reaching an end despite that.

With each of the hero's swings tremors ran through the castle, walls collapsed and floors crumbled. A countless number of slashes so fast they merged into a single line cut Lain's body into ever finer pieces, energy blasts hit her stomach and scattered her entrails, bolts of lightning poured down from above and violently ran through her body.

Lain's physical condition turned as grim as one would imagine, and yet, just a single moment later, she stood before the hero again as if nothing had happened.

The sage appeared so unaffected, if it weren't for her thoroughly tattered clothing it would have been difficult to believe she was under such a brutal barrage of attacks just a few moments ago.

Be it losing an arm, getting decapitated, having her entire body encased by an inferno: the next instant she would stand before them once more, without injury.

"What in the world... Is this how Heroes——, no, Sages fight?"

Edelgard raised her voice, filled with both dread and amazement. The two guards were watching the battle from a corner of the room.

Fortunately the hero focused only on the sage and made sure none of his attacks would particularly wound any of the bystanders, they would have most likely died from collateral damage a long time ago if he didn't. That said, they still had to fend off the chunks of rubble that came flying every now and then.

George was as stunned as Edelgard and replied.

"Can you even call it a fight? Sage-sama doesn't seem to be doing anything at all."

"Could it be she cancelled the Hero's gift?"

George was close to saying 'Do his attacks look like that of an ungifted to you?,' but after desperately trying to make sense of the scene before them that explanation didn't seem that unreasonable anymore either; the sight was just that abnormal.

"No, actually that can't be. The heroes' gifts are bestowed by the Sword Saints, so it shouldn't be possible for Sages to interfere. I believe Lain-sama really is receiving those attacks head-on, and instantly regenerating against them."

Gifts are continuously passed on to the next generation and those at the top of that chain of inheritance are able to regulate the gifts below them, but since the heroes are not connected to the sages they are outside of their control.

A sign of that separation is the difference in powers they bestow. While the sages' gifts tend to be related to the use of magic, the sword saints' gifts tend to be of a more physical nature. The hero before them was no exception, using a sword as his main weapon.

And while the spectators had their short talk the hero stopped his onslaught. He seemed to have realized his current strategy wasn't working.

"How about you just give up and leave again?"

She truly was unwounded, and before they knew it even her dress had magically returned to its original form.

"Damn monster!"

Despite his outburst of anger the hero knew that giving in to his resentment and attacking blindly wouldn't serve any purpose. For now he merely glared at her.

"Then how about we use this short break to have a conversation."

Lain looked genuinely carefree, as if she didn't even consider herself to have been under attack just seconds ago.

The hero didn't reply. However, neither did he go back on the attack; he may have had something to buy time for.

"You look like a hero alright, but why would a hero attack a sage? Shouldn't you be defeating some demon lord?"

That was also what George had been thinking. Sages were the ones governing this world, the ones protecting it, so what meaning was there in trying to kill one?

"Don't screw with me! You guys are nothing but harm to this world!"

"Not like I'm one to talk objectively, but personally I'd say us sages are handling things pretty well. We don't come down to interfere with things that often, and don't you guys have plenty of freedom to do your own thing? Even if you don't feel like that, we are still the protectors of this world. What do you think you're accomplishing by killing one of us? Just let us do our job."

"Don't tell me about freedom! How many people do you think died just because some sage felt like it?!"

"Sure, there are people that have died on a sage's whim, but if we weren't protecting this world a whole lot more would be dying, you know?"

"Are you telling me to overlook your cruelty because of that!"

"Hmm, here I thought heroes were supposed to fight for the greater good, but apparently that's not the case. Did someone close to you get killed by a sage? Stolen from you? Manipulated? Well, whatever it is, you came to the wrong one. I barely come down here."

"You're only the first! I'll kill every single one of you!"

Having bought enough time the hero entered his battle stance again.

He rose his sword to the skies and put all his power into throwing it towards the sage, where it pierced the floor to Lain's feet. He wasn't aiming at her.

Firmly planted into the ground the sword's broad blade began to shine and as if to answer the sword, Lain's surroundings also started brightening up: countless little blades were sticking out of the ground to the sage's feet — the hero must have scattered them at some point during the earlier attack — and reacted to the glowing straight sword, thin rays of light beaming from one blade to the next.

Only an instant later the beams began bending and cracking and soon an intricately designed magic circle had formed across the floor, the sage exactly in its middle.

"Do you think I care about your immortality!? Let's see you regenerate after I burn your entire being to nothing!"

The geometrical shape on the floor pulsed, unfolded countless times from within itself and finally turned into a solid body. At a speed one couldn't follow with their eyes Lain had been caged away.

The hero's right arm trembled as he stretched it out ahead of him, with his left hand he suppressed its shaking.

It was clear that the hero was about to go all out with his next attack, but George and the others couldn't interfere. He may have appeared defenseless, but the difference in actual power between them was just too overwhelming; had they approached him they would have been shut down in a heartbeat.

"Die!"

The hero shouted at the top of his lungs and the prison of light shone even brighter than before.

However, after a single flash it was already over.

The light ceased and everything was gone. The small blades the hero had used for the spell, the straight sword that looked like it had been plucked out of a legend, the beastman that was rolling around on the floor, and Lain.

The produced heat must have been immense, for even the floor had started to melt and glow like lava.

"Ariel... I've finally... taken down the first..."

The hero mumbled something as he lost the strength in his feet and fell to his knees.

He put so much into that one attack he could hardly even stand.

"How... how do we even treat a case like this?"

"What do you mean!? Of course the killing of a Sage is a major crime! We must immediately arrest him!"

Edelgard's usual habit of acting before thinking made George want to lie down and curl up next to the hero.

No matter how weakened he may be, they had no chance of arresting a hero. George looked over to the feudal lord at the other side of the room with a gaze that said "If you're an acolyte of sages then can't you do something about this?," but Masahiko vehemently shook his head. The responding gaze was equally vocal: "No way."

"So is this Ariel your dead lover or something?"

But there wasn't anything for George or Masahiko to do.

Just like she did all those times before, Lain stood in her spot anew.

Despair warped the hero's face.

"...How... did you escape...?"

"I didn't. Why would I if I can't be killed anyways?"

"...This can't be... even Sword Saint Kartena was tracelessly erased by this heat, there shouldn't have been anything left of you..."

As a matter of fact, Lain truly was entirely eradicated by that attack.

"I wouldn't be having such a hard time if I could die just by burning to utter nothingness. Honestly you might as well think about this degree of immortality as a curse, I don't even want to think about how much longer I'll live."

"...kill me..."

After being completely outmatched despite expending both body and soul, the hero drowned in despair.

"What are you talking about? All you did was flare up at me, I don't have a reason to kill you."

Lain responded to the hopeless hero with a voice that merely sounded a little tired of the situation.

It looked like for her, just being assaulted wasn't a reason to kill somebody. Her degree of tolerance was so excessive it gave George a feeling of eeriness.

"Pardon me, but how should this be settled then?"

George addressed Lain. If the hero were to die here he couldn't cause any more trouble, but Lain's intentions seemed to be elsewhere.

"Just deal with him according to the law. Home invasion, murder and destruction of property, those offenses basically cover it all, don't they?"

"Well, certainly, but I doubt us guards would be able to detain a Hero."

"Mhm, indeed. Then let's go with this."

Lain grabbed the hero's arm, turned around to a hole in the wall and flung him out like a piece of rubbish.

"Wha——!?"

"You guys can't take care of him, I don't feel like killing him. If he's going to be a problem just by being around then let's all agree he never came here in the first place."

She said she didn't want to kill him, but the room they were in was quite high up —— high enough for a normal person to instantly die from the fall.

"Understood. No one but us has come here."

The sages' words were absolute. Furthermore, that way of handling things was also the most convenient for him and Edelgard.

"Well then, since the dogman got blasted away we might as well call it a day. Edelgard. As I was going to say earlier, track down Yogiri Takatou and contact me as soon as you figure out where he is."

"Yes, Ma'am!"

Despite being thrown from one strange situation into the next, Edelgard didn't appear perturbed in the slightest.

George could only admit that being as thickheaded as her was amazing in a way.



That same time somewhere else, Yogiri and Tomochika were riding a train.

"Why do I have to crank a charger while being half buried by a fat ghost!?"

"Well, since the battery's empty it won't run unless it's being charged."

[I don't occupy any physical space so there's nothing to be upset about, is there? I for one don't mind.]

"It's, I don't know, stuffy! If you don't mind then go sit next to Takatou-kun instead!"

[Err, no, I'd rather not. He's scary.]

Of the four train seats, Tomochika and Yogiri were occupying the ones opposite each other. Mocomoko sat in the seat next to Tomochika, but because of how plump she was she also filled half of the neighboring seat.

"Then just go float in the air!"

Even though she had her part to say about it Tomochika continued to crank the charger, and Yogiri, unconcerned by the quarrel, comfortably played his game.

[That's not as easy as you may think. When traveling in a vehicle I can lose my grasp of relative movement at any time! I have to keep up a proper image of moving along with the train, for example by sitting in a seat like this, or I might get left behind.]

"You're so troublesome for being a ghost! Just vanish then!"

[It's not like I intentionally made myself visible to you, you simply became able to see me.]

Tomochika must have accidentally acquired ghost vision at some point.

"Noticing something once can be a big deal."

Now Yogiri joined their discussion. When Tomochika told him about Mokomoko's existence he ended up seeing her as well.

[Exactly! It's like when somebody points out a person's ear hair and even though you didn't even notice it at first from then on you can't look at anything else!]

"What's with that comparison, are you actually an existence of the same level as ear hair!?"

[Ah, forget what I just said. Give me a minute and I'll think of a better example!]

"Anyway, if Dannoura-san is the one switching seats there won't be a problem, right?"

"Oh, true!"

If it's just her and Yogiri then there would be more than enough space. For some reason she was under the impression they had to sit across from each other.

Tomochika quickly changed seats and, now sitting next to Yogiri, peeked at his

console's screen.

His play style was clumsy as ever.

Having enthusiasm for games and being skilled at them appeared to be two different things.

——Wuah, I'm way too close!

Just as Tomochika noticed how far she had leaned in to watch Yogiri play he suddenly stopped the game and looked at her.

"Ah, y-yes?"

She was getting a little panicky from being stared at, but Yogiri ignored that and pushed her down.

"Wha—! Now wait a moment! What are you doing!? M-mokomoko-san is watching!"

[Don't let me bother you, since I'm your guardian spirit you'd best get used to it early on.]

"Actually, wait more than a moment! Mokomoko-san, do you intend to be next to me at all times!?"

CRASH

While Tomochika was fidgeting about, something cut by right above them.

"Huh?"

She looked past Yogiri's shoulders and saw the sky. Which is to say, the train's ceiling got blown away.

But it wasn't just the ceiling, the upper parts of the seats had also vanished, and if it weren't for Yogiri pushing her down her head would most likely have suffered the same fate.

"I think this is a good time for an explanation!"

"Sensed some killing intent."

'Killing intent' was a rather lacking description for it; hazards to his life were concretely visible to Yogiri.

"I wonder what's going on, I'd be surprised if someone was targeting us."

They didn't know where the attack came from, but it looked like the train cars were being thrashed by several somethings.

The train made an emergency stop and loud alarms started ringing.

CHAPTER 19

LIKE NOBUNAGA ODA AND ENCHOU SANYUUTEI

[A notice to all passengers. It appears a Sage has entered combat with an Aggressor nearby. On grounds of official wartime regulations, all freight and carriage contracts are hereby voided. For refunds on tickets, please consult the responsible station offices.]

A loud voice sounded through the area before cutting out with a crack.

"...How should we even interpret that?"

Tomochika asked Yogiri, who was still on top of her.

"'Whatever happens, not our problem,' I guess?"

"They won't even help us evacuate!?"

"Well, if those attacks from earlier are going to continue I doubt the train staff will have the time to look after passengers."

"Then first of all, can you move? Not like this will help against one of those things from before."

The situation seemed to have calmed down for the time being, so Yogiri got off of her and took a look around the train car. Based on the way the train was destroyed a bunch of objects must have run right through it, cleanly cutting out several parts of its frame. The scene made him recall his classmate Higashida, whose fireball caused a similar phenomenon.

Since the train had been fully booked there must have been casualties, but the scenery wasn't actually that gruesome; most of the dead bodies had vanished along with the missing train parts.

By now, all the passengers had begun frantically getting off the train. Yogiri watched

on and spoke up.

"Getting off the train won't help a whole lot if that same attack happens again, will it? Then again, there's not much point in staying here either, let's pack up as well."

The train had already suffered quite the damage, it was unlikely it would start up again even if the sage's battle ended.

And so they gathered their belongings and walked out of the now empty train.

Because Mokomoko Dannoura was a ghost, Yogiri didn't particularly pay attention to whether she was with them, but she would probably tag along even if they left her behind.

The railway they were on was right between the Hakua ancient woodlands and the Garla canyon. Facing the direction they were traveling Hakua was to their left and Garla to their right.

Yogiri looked over to the Garla canyon where he assumed the attack had come from. A good ways from the rails a steep cliff marked the start of the canyon, to the bottom of which lay a river. After that came a steep, rocky mountain that had its stone laid bare. The river went on to branch it many smaller ones, giving the landscape a labyrinthine appearance.

"What exactly even happened?"

Tomochika spoke as she turned to face the same direction as Yogiri, and found an answer right away.

There was a giant.

"A robot! Hey, that's totally a giant robot!"

Tomochika got a little hysteric, but indeed, a huge humanlike something was clinging to the rocky surface of the mountain.

What stood out were its four arms and the way its metallic skeleton was rather lackluster in armoring despite its gigantic size. Its two left hands were holding on to the mountain cliff while its two right ones were wielding a massive shield and sword.

The head had horns and, as if it were too heavy for its slender frame, gave it a slightly hunched back.

As Tomochika pointed out it was most likely a machine; nowhere on its body was something that appeared organic.

"I'm guessing that's the Aggressor they mentioned. Where's the sage then?"

"Isn't it that guy over there?"

When Yogiri looked in the direction Tomochika was pointing to he saw a floating person high up in the air near the robot. Compared to the colossus the sage barely made up a speck in the sky.

"Wow, good job noticing him from here."

He was genuinely impressed, her eyesight really was something else.

[Don't underestimate the physical abilities of those of House Dannoura. Like in those martial arts manga, the name Dannoura has established itself by regularly winning over the blood of famous people! Like Nobunaga Oda and Enchou Sanyuutei, a lot of legends are mixed into our bloodline!]

"Huh, I didn't know about that... Wait, what kind of physical feats are you asking for from a storyteller!?"

(TN: Enchou Sanyuutei: famous writer and rakugo performer)

Tomochika was doubtful, that was her first time hearing about it.

[It worked out in the end so don't mind the details.]

Meanwhile, the sage and aggressor resumed their fight.

The destruction continued with an energy blast fired by the sage getting blocked by the giant's shield, rebounding off of it and erasing entire chunks of the surrounding mountains and cliffs in an instant.

It appeared they found the cause of the train's demolition.

In return, the giant himself went on the attack with a sword slash. Based on the sword's massive size it must have had equally massive weight, but with how nimbly

the robot handled it it almost appeared weightless. Each swing of the sword shaved off parts of the mountainscape.

And suddenly, the giant robot disappeared.

The mountain it was using as its foothold collapsed and a quick look around the area revealed the giant's figure on a different mountain summit — he jumped.

From there he used his right arms to fetch what looked like an assault rifle that had been holstered to his back and began a rapid-fire onslaught.

Mountains crumbled and splashes like water fountains rose from the rivers; with each blink of the eye the canyon's geography changed.

Neither of the two seemed to pay any heed to their surroundings and even for Yogiri it wasn't a situation he could view optimistically. Countless stray bullets had come flying their way and the number of fleeing passengers hit by them steadily increased.

"Well this is problematic. Escaping from here looks like it's going to be difficult."

"Your carefree expression really doesn't fit those words."

Yogiri took out their map and, by considering the time they had spent traveling and comparing the landscape around them to that of the map, judged that they were about ten kilometers away from the Hayabusa train station.

"Dodging stray bullets for ten kilometers is pretty risky, maybe we should enter the Hakua forest?"

The majority of fleeing passengers could be split into three categories: those that ran along the railway towards Hayabusa, those that escaped into the forest, and those that were too shocked to take action.

"What? Aren't you going to take care of those two!?"

"Why?"

"Huh? Well, because they're in our way?"

Tomochika didn't expect to be asked for the reason.

"You know, when you put it like that it kind of sounds like you think killing people for walking slowly in front of you is fine as well."

"I mean, weren't we almost killed by them earlier? You know, because of that thing that came flying?"

"Yeah, but it's not like they were targeting us. It was just one attack, that could be called accidental shooting."

"What's with this newspaperlike optimism!?"

"I feel like if you don't draw a strict line then before you know it you'll be killing people just because they bothered you a little. I'd rather avoid that."

"Ah, err, sorry then. I guess that was pretty narrow-minded of me."

Tomochika seemed quite disheartened.

"It's alright, not trying to reproach you or anything."

Yogiri thought they wouldn't need to kill either of them if they just watched out for the stray bullets.

Also, another reason for his mindset was that killing people for every small thing sounded like a lot of effort to him.

"Anyway, avoiding their attacks shouldn't be too difficult, so if we just proceed carefully——"

'——we'll be fine.' Before he could finish, an explosive noise echoed through the whole area and together with a strong gust of wind a huge cloud of dust passed over them.

At first they couldn't tell what happened, but due to how dark it suddenly got they quickly realized: the giant was blocking the sun.

When the dust settled the giant was standing next to them, one of its feet on the train and several train cars destroyed because of that. He was a couple dozen meters away

from them, but still easily within range to attack them.

From one moment to the next, Yogiri and Tomochika had found themselves in the shadow of death.

"Oi, stop running away, damn it!"

With little delay the sage had also appeared next to them, a boy of fairly small build in a mantle far too big for him.

Floating in the air he glared at the giant before suddenly making a wave with his hand.

"Dannoura-san, take a step back."

Yogiri took Tomochika's hand and walked back a little — the perfect spot to observe an ice pillar impaling the ground where they had just been standing. And it didn't end at just one, right before their eyes hundreds of spears of ice, a meter in thickness, gradually formed a line of destruction that went on for as far as they could see.

It was obvious that such an attack wouldn't even have an effect on the giant robot.

However, for a human, getting hit by just one of the icicles would be fatal. As a result, the area of grouped up people that hadn't been sure where to escape to had turned into a scene of atrocity.

"How cruel... why? There wasn't any reason to do that!"

Tomochika couldn't suppress her voice and ended up catching the floating boy's attention.

"What the heck? I meant to turn all of you into minced meat after seeing how neatly you lined up for me, what do you think you're doing still standing there?"

While keeping an eye on the giant the boy addressed the two travelers.

Yogiri replied.

"I should be the one asking that. We're bystanders, why did you attack?"

The boy was in a fight with the giant, there shouldn't have been any reason for him to attack random citizens passing by in a train.

"Did you just talk to me? Who even allowed you to raise your head? Get on your knees and rub your head against the ground when you see a sage! That's your duty, so learn your damn place, eyesore!"

Yogiri was relieved.

It was a simple case, there wasn't any need for debate.

"You're the eyesore here."

And with those words Yogiri used his power.

The boy fell to the ground with a dull thump and it looked like his neck broke when he landed, but by that time he was already dead.

"Huh? You killed him?"

"Yeah. Clear call for instant death if you ask me."

There wasn't any need to hesitate when dealing with someone planning to kill them without listening to anything they said.

Now Yogiri looked up at the giant robot.

With the sage dead they had no way of knowing how the robot would react, but right when Yogiri thought about taking the initiative the robot took action itself.

"W a i t . I h a v e n o i n t e n t i o n t o f i g h t ."

A synthetic voice spoke to them, and it seemed to be that of the robot.

CHAPTER 20

THIS ROBOT'S WAY TOO GOOD AT UNDERSTANDING ITS CIRCUMSTANCES!

The giant was about the same height as a ten story building; Yogiri's estimate was 30 meters.

"No but seriously, this is totally a robot."

After seeing it from up close Tomochika was convinced.

Although, despite appearing to be a machine it also had something beastlike about it.

An armored, four-armed skeleton with a hunched spine that made it look like its slender skeletal frame was bending under the weight. Furthermore, on its head there was a large horn and in what looked to be its only eye glowed a dim, red light.

"Reminds me of the dragon with how unreal it feels."

While Yogiri was responding to Tomochika the giant started slowly squatting to the ground. Perhaps that was its default stance for when outside of battle, but then its mobility would certainly be impressive. Usually a crouching position couldn't be called easy to react from.

Yogiri picked up where the robot left off.

"So, you said you had no intention to fight?"

[I n d e e d . I do not intend to enter a battle I can not win.]

Earlier its voice sounded entirely synthetic, but it seemed like it was slowly but steadily regulating it to a more natural tone.

"Huh, are you actually a girl riding a robot?"

The giant's voice had turned feminine, and given that the automatic translation necklaces weren't being triggered the robot was even speaking Japanese. It seemed like it had adjusted to the two's speech after just listening to them talk for a little.

[There is no passenger. Please view me as what you would consider an autonomous robot.]

"Why the girl's voice then?"

[In order to gain your favor. My database has records of this kind of voice having a high chance of inviting human males' good will.]

Now Tomochika raised her voice.

"That's scarily calculating!"

[After performing several hundred million battle simulations, the conduct most likely to allow me to fulfill my duty has been judged to be an approach as peaceable and submissive as possible. Sharing the details of my thought process with you as I am doing now is also for the sake of acquiring your trust. I fear the possibility of being considered a potential threat and getting forcefully terminated were I to leave this place without a word. Obtaining your sympathy has been calculated to be indispensable in fulfilling my duty.]

"This robot's way too good at understanding its circumstances!"

Probably due to its mechanical reasoning being uninfluenced by any overly optimistic hopes mixed into it, Yogiri thought. It wasn't often he saw someone treat him with this much caution; most of the time when people witnessed his ability they wouldn't immediately accept it as reality.

"Avoiding a fight sounds good, but do you mind if we ask some questions?"

There wouldn't be a problem in just letting the giant robot take its leave, but they would rather find out about what exactly happened here first. If Yogiri really killed a sage just now then that might very well affect them on the journey ahead.

[If they are within answerability, I will.]

"Why were you fighting with that guy over there?"

Yogiri pointed to the dead boy.

[Because he attacked me. I assume he viewed his conduct to be for the sake of protecting this world; they call us Aggressors, after all.]

(TN: "Invaders" with "Aggressors" as furigana.)

"So your goal isn't actually invasion?"

[If you mean as in invading a country and occupying its territory then no, it is not. However, I will not shy away from applying military force if it is for the sake of fulfilling my duty. I can see why they view their actions as self-defense.]

"And this duty of yours is what?"

The giant went silent. Looked like it was something the robot would rather not say.

"Alright, alright. Not like it has anything to do with us. We don't have any intention to fight either, so feel free to leave for your duty or whatever."

[I would like to negotiate: If there is anything I can offer, I will do so. In return you will not attack. Does this sound agreeable?]

"Hmm. Just being told you're allowed to leave doesn't sound credible enough, so you'd rather get on our good side first?"

"What a quarrelsome robot! If you're told you may leave then just leave, do we look that untrustworthy?... Actually wait, Takatou-kun, are you telling me you can kill a robot?"

"Let me return that question, why do you think I can't?"

"Huh? Well, robots can't die, can they?"

Tomochika was caught off guard by his question.

"Don't robots live and die as well?"

"Are you getting philosophical now?!"

"I mean, I can't tell you without having tried it either, but looks like that's the assumption the robot's going with."

Yogiri pointed at the giant next to them, whose red eye flickered for a moment.

[I have no knowledge of how you perceive my existence, but I consider myself to be alive, personally.]

"Oh, another question. If you're an invader then where did you actually come from?"

[From outside this world.]

"Do you know how to get back then? We were actually forcefully summoned to this world."

[I apologize, but I can only return to my own world. I do not know your world's coordinates.]

If the robot could have just sent them home pretty much all of their problems would be settled, but it seemed like it wasn't going to be that easy.

"Coordinates, huh. If we had those we could travel across worlds?"

[Correct.]

"Alright, with that information I'd say we're even. Thanks."

Returning to their world was their objective from the very start, but until now they had no clue of how to actually go about that. That piece of information alone was more than valuable enough, Yogiri thought.

[Are you certain you are satisfied with just information?]

"Yeah. Although if you could take us along once we figure out our world's coordinates that'd be even better."

[Understood.]

"Dannoura-san, do you have anything to ask for?"

"Well, I don't really know what robots carry with them so that's kind of difficult to answer..."

She was stumped, and indeed, it wasn't easy to imagine what a robot from a different dimension could offer them.

[Aha, leave this one to me!]

Tomochika was still trying to think of something to ask for, when suddenly, of all people, Mocomoko was the one to raise her voice.



Edelgard, troop leader of the kingdom's first guardian unit, and George, member thereof, were stupefied.

After receiving Lain's orders they had boarded a construction work rail car and made their way to Hayabusa. Currently they were ten kilometers away from their destination, at a train wreck.

And there, they found a dead boy lying on the ground.

"I don't even know what's going on anymore!"

"That's Santarou-sama... isn't it?"

Edelgard couldn't contain her bewilderment and George wasn't in much better shape himself.

A demolished train, unusable rails, burnt bodies, and a newly terraformed canyon; those things they could still accept, it wasn't particularly rare for when sages went into battle.

However, the sage most likely responsible for all that was currently lying on the ground before them, his head turned far beyond what a human body was normally capable of. That was most likely the sage's cause of death, but George just couldn't believe his eyes.

Sages were absolute.

There should have been no way for one to just lay about dead next to some rails.

"Just what in the world happened here!"

Edelgard shouted once more, but there was no one there that could have answered her.

The only living people around them were the construction workers they had arrived with; all the passengers were either dead or had fled a long time ago.

"He must have been in a fight with some Aggressor, but with circumstances like these... maybe it was them?"

The two guards had arrived here on their pursuit of Yogiri Takatou and Tomochika Dannoura.

However, instead of the sage candidates they only discovered the broken train those two had traveled with, and an actual, dead sage.

Since they had been told about the power their two targets potentially possessed they couldn't help but give in to their desperate attempts to make sense of the situation and view it as the work of the two ungifted.

"Whatever, I have no clue what's what anymore! I'll be reporting this situation to Lain-sama!"

It was a little too much to handle for mere guards.

Our translation is based on the webnovel version of Instant Death, but after taking a look at the light novel I found some official romaji transliterations different from ours, so we'll update our translation accordingly.

Updates:

- Yogiri Takatoo to Yogiri Takatou
- Shion to Sion, pronounced 「she-on」
- Character depictions can now be found on the chapter list

CHAPTER 21

CAN'T KILL WHAT'S DEAD

A pigeon with the voice of Edelgard began its report.

A carrier pigeon, a magically spawned species that played a large role in this world's information network. Carrier pigeons, unlike the art of direct long distance transmission through magic, didn't require any particular experience in high-ranking magic to use and as such found a lot more everyday usage.

The location was Lain's home.

In the parlor thereof, two sages were facing each other across a table; one was the master of the mansion, sage Lain. The other was the one responsible for summoning Yogiri Takatou and Tomochika Dannoura into this world, sage Sion.

Edelgard's voice made it easy to imagine how badly she must have been panicking when making the report, but the essence of the message was clear.

Sage Santarou had died, and the two ungifted candidates may be responsible.

"This is why I called you here."

Lain had summoned Sion to her mansion on the grounds of having something to discuss with her.

"My, you're concerned about my candidates?"

The responsibility for the sage candidates fell on the sage that summoned them, which also meant that other sages didn't particularly interfere in the summoner's treatment of his or her candidates.

"Now that a sage has died we can't let them walk freely anymore, for being candidates they've already overstepped their bounds. Also, this incident has taken place in my domain."

Santarou's territory was the region around the kingdom of Mani, but in his pursuit of the Aggressor he entered that of Lain. Trespassing another sage's sphere of influence while repelling an Aggressor itself wasn't big enough of a deal for Lain to mention, but in the case of a sage's death the ruler of the incident's region could expect more than a few questions of responsibility coming their way.

"You don't have any evidence it was them, do you? From what I've been told Santarou-san headed out to intercept some big robot, wasn't that what killed him?"

"Possibly. However, even just the suspicion of a sage candidate being capable of killing a sage is reason enough to deal with them immediately."

Lain was interested in the ungifteds' power and had intended to watch over them for a while longer, but now the situation had turned too urgent to allow that. Unconcerned by Lain's displeasure, Sion replied.

"If they could kill a sage then they wouldn't really be candidates anymore, would they? Might as well make them sages right away if that were the case. But still, I've seen both of them close up and neither struck me as very rich in potential."

"So how do you think Santarou died?"

"Well, Santarou-san had absolute control over all archetypes of magic, right? The number of magic spells he could use was easily the highest among sages. And sure, he knew how to use that magic efficiently, adapting to whichever battlefield he ended up in, but in the end his spells' actual power wasn't all that special. A jack of all trades, master of none, basically. Isn't it quite likely he got himself killed because of some slight miscalculation?"

"Sure, that sounds simple enough, but Santarou had close to no injuries. There was a bone fracture, but looks like that was postmortem. The actual cause of death is unknown, and from what I've heard from your acolyte the two candidates appeared capable of something like instant death magic."

"Well, Youichi-kun is quite the worrywart."

Sion let out a sigh, her entire attitude saying 'What are you getting at?', and continued.

"Let's say they are the culprits, why would they kill a sage? You said Santarou-san didn't have any external injuries, right? Meaning they didn't retrieve his philosopher's stone."

"Yeah, the report didn't mention anything about his torso being torn open. And sure, it might be odd for someone to kill a sage and then just leave him there, but it's not like there's any point in trying to think up a motive for them. Be the actual circumstances as they may, I'm going to deal with them. Not that I require your permission, I just thought I'd discuss it with you beforehand."

"Deal with them, you say. Weren't you against murder as a matter of principle?"

"I don't remember being that idealistic. Unlike other sages I just don't kill for no reason. Doesn't mean I'll hesitate when I do have a reason."

"Fine then, do as you wish with those two. I actually expected you to have called me here for a different reason."

"As in?"

"Also related to Santarou-san, actually; I'm talking about Kurayami. Apparently Santarou-san said he drove it away, but it's still in this world. That's what I expected you want to discuss."

"The question of who'll be responsible for repelling it next, basically?"

Now that Santarou was dead there was a vacancy in the sages' territory control. The one to end up with carrying its responsibility was likely to be either Sion or Lain, both of whose domains bordered on that of Santarou's.

"Ah! Now that I think about it, don't you owe me now?"

Happy with her own idea, Sion softly clapped her hands together. Lain could tell what she was getting at.

"Fine, I'll handle it."

Someone had to do it and it wasn't like Lain had any reason to go out of her way to avoid the responsibility. Furthermore, if that was going to be enough to get even with Sion then all the better.

"Then I'll be taking my leave."

With that, Sion's business was settled and she promptly left the mansion.

"Masayuki."

In the now empty room, Lain addressed seemingly no one.

"You called? Lain."

And suddenly, a man's voice responded from behind her.

"Gather the Anti-Death Battalion and head to Hayabusa. You should find two Japanese called Yogiri Takatou and Tomochika Dannoura there, deal with them."

"Wait a minute, what? You want me to head out for just two Japanese? What the hell?"

"It's just two, but there's a definite reason to get rid of them. They've got something like instant death magic, so there's a decent chance a regular troop wouldn't stand a chance."

"Ahh, aight, I see. So it's cause we're the most suited for the job, eh? Can't kill what's dead."

The Anti-Death Battalion was made up of roughly 100 units, most of them undead or golems: a whole troop of soldiers immune to instant death magic.

"But hey, why bother with the whole gang? Dispatch me alone and I'll settle it myself."

Masayuki was one of Lain's adherents — a vampire of her blood — and an accordingly high ranking undead himself.

"Capturing them will most likely require that much personnel. In fact, recruit new soldiers on-site if you don't have enough."

"Oioioi! Hey, aight, hey now, you saying I can wreck Hayabusa if necessary, that's what you mean, right?"

Masayuki's voice was full of delight; from one moment to the next he was in a great mood.

"If necessary, exactly. Don't act out of line, you hear?"

"Don't cha worry! I'll handle it, you go ahead and expect some nice results!"

Lain gave him a warning, but Masayuki hardly seemed to have heard it.

"I was going to head there myself, but sadly I've got an Aggressor to take care of."

Taking care of a sage killer was no small matter either, but Aggressors were still a higher priority.

"Yeeeah, I'll leave those mystery dudes to you. The whole blood drenching, flesh scattering and atrocious dying you only get when slaughtering puny humans is more my thing, you know me."

Masayuki and his battalion should have more than enough might to take care of the matter. If the two ungifteds' battle strength really relied entirely on instant death magic then there was nothing they could do to save themselves.

—However, if not even the Anti-Death Battalion can handle them...

It was a one in a million chance, and Lain's hope.

【 ACT 3 】

CHAPTER 22

MAGNIFICENT AS ALWAYS, MASTER!

Four kilometers south of the destroyed train.

Having walked along the rails for about three hours Hayabusa finally came into view. It was a rather slow pace for two high schoolers, and cause for that was mainly Yogiri's weak stamina.

"See? We should have asked the robot to carry us."

Tomochika looked down at the resting Yogiri, who had promptly called for a break after discovering a fallen tree. Since they were both wearing backpacks filled to the brim one would expect them to be somewhat equally tired, but unlike Yogiri Tomochika was as lively as could be.

"I don't think we're in a situation where we can go around catching attention like that. Imagine someone saw us getting carried by that robot?"

That giant was what this world called an Aggressor, meaning the natives most likely considered it their enemy. Yogiri could imagine that being seen traveling together with it would make them end up looking like enemies as well.

"Odd for such an understanding robot to have such a bad reputation. Also, say, could it be you're bad with exercise, Takatou-kun? Although you didn't seem very clumsy at all when you pushed me down earlier."

Tomochika asked Yogiri, slightly provocatively.

"I was forced to exercise so I'm somewhat agile, but yeah, I'll admit my lack of stamina."

When they resumed their journey even Yogiri was hurrying at first, then he started

slowing down and eventually he came to a halt and called for a rest. The sword he was carrying had started bothering him a long time ago and now lay thrown away somewhere along the rails of Kuenza to Hayabusa. His argument was that he couldn't use it anyway, and the idea of having to carry it with him in the future as well didn't do much to convince him otherwise.

"Maybe you should do some exercise and train your body? Who knows what awaits us in this world."

Tomochika spoke as she sat down next to Yogiri.

She didn't appear to be wearing a weapon either. The ones she bought back in Kuenza were left behind in the train; partly because taking them along was inconvenient, but mostly because she had acquired a new, far more compact weapon, which was currently camouflaging as part of her outfit.

The new weapon was originally part of the robot's insides, a material that was capable of freely changing its form. Apparently the robot mostly used it as its muscles.

Compared to the robot's external material it was rather soft, but when turning its solidity all the way up it was more than hard enough to keep up with the usual materials used for weapons.

"We should've at least asked if it had something like a vehicle. Was there a reason we had to leave that abruptly?"

[Mhm, agreed. If we had been a little more pesty we could have probably gotten a whole lot more out of that robot.]

Tomochika asked and the floating Mokomoko chimed in.

"Was risky to stick around there, too much shadow. I've told you about being able to sense stuff like killing intent and life hazards, right?"

"Yeah, that you can sort of see them. Kind of like Morihei Ueshiba, right?"

"Who?"

"He was this famous Aikido master, legend says he was able to dodge bullets, apparently because he could see their trajectories like light rays before they were even fired."

"Might be something similar then, yeah. Although in my case it's less like light rays and more like black lines, kind of like shadows. The whole area at the train was covered in that shadow and it was getting even denser pretty quickly. Like 30 percent risk of disaster."

"Hmm. '30 percent' doesn't really tell me anything, does it work like a weather forecast?"

"Kind of. This place feels like under one percent so compared to earlier it's pretty safe."

"It feels like you're trying to make it sound like we're resting after finally escaping some danger zone, but in truth you just needed a break, right?"

"Hey, nothing wrong with a break. We've pretty much arrived already anyway."

Hayabusa, a train station between a canyon and an ancient forest.

Since that was all they had been told about the town they were expecting a small cozy settlement, but contrary to that the city before them was actually of quite large scope.

"Looks like this one doesn't have a wall."

"Would probably be impractical with all the trains entering and leaving."

Yogiri answered Tomochika as he looked at all the railways leading into the city. That transportation network was probably the reason for how developed Hayabusa was.

"Doesn't it mean that they don't have any enemies to worry about?"

"Not so sure about that. From what I can tell this world is full of monsters, aside from the places under protection by the sages."

"You say that but we didn't meet any on our way here, did we?"

"Well that's because I was killing everything."

"...Huh?"

Tomochika had to think about that for a moment.

"A bunch of monsters and thugs were targeting us."

"Tell me about that sort of stuff! Now I feel like an idiot, just humming and walking along without a care!"

The majority of the enemies had been approaching from the ancient woodlands.

The monsters most likely took notice of them by smell and the criminals might have come from some train raiders' stronghold in that vicinity.

"Just thought it's nothing worth mentioning."

"I'm starting to wonder why I'm even carrying a weapon..."

[Mhm. I programmed a decent amount of shape shifting patterns into it, but now I'm not so sure they'll be necessary.]

All of a sudden Tomochika was holding a sword in her hands. The strange material that had been camouflaging as part of her school uniform had moved to her hands and changed shape there, but with how smoothly it happened it looked like she summoned it out of thin air.

"Actually, wait a minute! Mekomoko-san, weren't you a ghost from the Heian era!? Why are you even able to manage some sci-fi weapon like you've seen it a hundred times!?"

[No matter the environment, the Dannoura Style adapts and continues to evolve! Recently I was focusing on electronic warfare, were you not aware?]

"Of course not, that's not exactly a field of study you'd expect a ghost to specialize in!"

"Although it's a great help that she does. Mekomoko-san, do you think you can take apart and analyze the whole 'system' thing?"

[Well, about that. With the one million credits we got from that robot I bought a license for one of the middleware products used in Battle Song. The software that Battle Song is based on is open source so I should be able to somewhat reverse engineer it now, but they really made a lot of changes to it, I'll have to figure out a way that'll let me look into what exactly they modified. Once that is done our understanding of this world's inner workings should finally make some progress. Might even be possible to hack it.]

"How did this discussion take such an unexpected turn and what's this feeling of being left behind!?"

Tomochika was becoming more and more perplexed.



The two travelers finished resting and entered the city of Hayabusa.

There were no city walls nor an inspection upon entering; anyone was free to come and go. That said, the town did have some poles standing in regular intervals from each other, drawing a circle around the city. They most likely marked the edge of the celestial protection.

Once more, stone streets and stone buildings. The atmosphere wasn't too different from that of Kuenza, the first town they had been to, but as far as Yogiri's impression went this one seemed livelier.

"So, now that we're here we'll wait for everyone else to pass through, right?"

"We can wait here or head to the royal capital in advance. Your thoughts?"

"If we go by train again getting to the capital should be pretty quick, right? I'd say let's wait here for a while and move on if we don't end up meeting them."

"Alright, let's start by finding a place to stay then. Celestina recommended a hotel, let's check that one out first."

"Sounds good. If Celestina recommended it we might as well go straight for that one."

Looked like Tomochika had pretty much absolute trust in Celestina.

They followed the map Celestina had drawn up for them and discovered the recommended hotel right away. It ended up being fairly extravagant again, similar to their last one.

"If it isn't Dannoura-san!"

They had just entered the lobby when suddenly a voice addressed them; a quick look in its direction revealed a Japanese high schooler with black hair and black eyes approaching them. Yogiri didn't recognize him, but since he knew Tomochika it was most likely one of their classmates.

It appeared he was just about to leave the hotel with several native-looking girls following behind him.

"Hm? Oh, Tachibana-kun? How come you're here?"

Their classmates were currently traveling through the primeval forest Hakua, it shouldn't have been possible for them to arrive at Hayabusa before Yogiri and Tomochika, who had taken the train.

"So you were safe, that's nice. Well, about me, I split up from the rest of the class. No point in going along with an inefficient leveling method, you know?"

"Ah, I see. Although not really."

Even Tomochika was caught off guard by the sudden encounter with a classmate and wasn't sure what to say.

"What's with that woman! Sure acting overly familiar towards Yuuki-sama!"

And just like that, one of the girls behind Tachibana made her hostility known.

"Excuse me?"

The reaction was so unexpected Tomochika wasn't sure how to respond; the situation really didn't do much in explaining what she was suddenly being criticized for.

"Leave it, Erika. These two are my classmates."

"If Yuuki-sama says so..."

Erika reluctantly pulled back.

"Magnificent as ever, Master! What a tolerant heart even towards such uncultured people! Truly a personality fit for a monarch!"

This time one of the other girls behind Tachibana raised her voice.

"Takatou-kun... what's going on here?"

"You're asking me?"

Based on the girls attitude it almost seemed like they were worshipping Tachibana.

"Meeting you here must be some kind of click of fate, Dannoura-san. Will you become my lover?"

And in a heartbeat the girls' stares went from hostile to murderous.

"...Pardon?"

While Tomochika was getting more and more confused by the situation, Yogiri was struggling to suppress his power's reaction to the girls' killing intent.

CHAPTER 23

IT'S GETTING KIND OF FUNNY ACTUALLY

Inside the lobby of a high-society hotel in the city of Hayabusa, three classmates were having an unexpected meeting.

Apparently the name of the high schooler was Yuuki Tachibana. Naturally, Yogiri didn't remember him and looked at Tachibana as if it was their first time seeing each other.

Three girls were accompanying Tachibana; even though it was only the second day since they arrived in this world it appeared he had already gathered companions from among the natives.

"Erm, I'm not really sure what's going on. You aren't confessing to me right now, are you?"

'Lover' really wasn't something one would expect to hear from a high schooler. Even Yogiri, who didn't have any friends to joke around with, knew that much.

Unconcerned, Tachibana continued.

"Can you decide within two minutes? If you don't make up your mind quickly enough you'll lose all the benefits gained from being my lover."

Persuading someone by limiting their time to think, a classic.

But still, unless there was sufficient value in becoming his lover no one would just agree to it, although Tachibana seemed convinced that such value was there.

"No need for any benefits right now, I'd rather hear about what you're doing here actually."

Tomochika turned him down without a second thought, which only made the girls' glares worse.

There was certainly an intent to kill, but nothing concrete as of yet; Yogiri decided to continue watching for the time being.

"Are you sure about that? If you end up changing your mind later you'll become a mid-rank slave at best, you know? You're letting the opportunity of a lifetime slip away right now."

"Should I be worried about how little I can follow what you're saying?!"

Tachibana seemed genuinely surprised by how the discussion was going. He must have seriously thought she would agree to his proposal.

Yogiri on the other hand was thinking about whether Tachibana might have been summoned to this world for the second time already, like Hanakawa and the other two. It was the only explanation he could come up with for Tachibana's absurd mindset.

"Yuuki-sama! I believe getting involved with such people is a waste of time! We have an expedition to carry out!"

"To think someone would just decline Master's proposal! Even the status of mid-rank slave is too generous, I reckon!"

"...Yuuki... can I kill them?"

The girls behind Tachibana voiced their displeasure one after the other, but Tachibana only needed to raise his hand for the three of them to quiet down.

"We can put off the expedition for now. But Tomochika, you really are being hasty here. Ah, are you worried about Takatou? I accept males as labor slaves only, but I can make him a special low-rank slave if you'd like. He's still a classmate, after all."

"...At first it was just annoying, but now it's getting kind of funny actually."

For a moment it seemed like Tomochika was about to lose her cool, but that was all she mumbled.

"Yeah... a situation this confusing makes it kind of difficult to get upset."

Yogiri quietly agreed with Tomochika. The discussion with Tachibana had somehow gone from irritating to interesting.

"Sorry, but with this whole lack of an explanation of what you're on about we're not particularly eager to group up with you. Can you instead just tell us what you're in Hayabusa for?"

"I guess that's fair enough. Alright, I'll explain. But I'll tell you right now, you'll regret not becoming my followers right away."

Yogiri tried moving the discussion forward and Tachibana actually went along with it. Looked like he was finally done with his obscure talk.

"You girls go on ahead."

With quite some reluctance Tachibana's followers did as they were told and left the hotel first.

Without another word he made his way to a table in a corner of the lobby. Based on his attitude it seemed like he wasn't even considering the possibility of the other two not just following him.

"Ah, Takatou-kun. Are you maybe thinking that Tachibana-kun is acting that way because of something like the system's or some other power's corruption?"

"Isn't he?"

"Nope. Attitude-wise he's always been that way, although I have no clue what he's talking about."

"Huh."

Yogiri was a little surprised.

"Narcissistic and over-confident. Well, thanks to his looks he was always pretty

popular with girls so I guess I can see how he turned out that way."

"...High school might've been a more interesting place than I thought."

After all this time, Yogiri started to think that maybe he shouldn't have spent all his time at school asleep.



In the back of the hotel's lobby, at a meeting corner.

Yogiri and Tomochika sat on a sofa with Tachibana sitting on the opposite end of the table.

"First of all, please be at ease. You remember how the sages will squeeze magic power out of us like livestock if we fail to produce a new sage within a month? That won't happen, because I'm guaranteed to become a sage."

"Never before have I seen someone with such a smug look on their face!"

But even Tomochika's tsukkomi was brushed aside by Tachibana's confidence.

"So even if you two only stand around watching, your safety is guaranteed. That said, even though you are my classmates I can't just reward you for doing nothing. Makes sense, right?"

A summoned class of students is treated as one group, a "clan," and given the task of producing a sage within one month. If successful, the new sage takes charge of all the remaining candidates as his or her acolytes.

However, just turning one of them into a sage doesn't mean all of them get to live a stable life. In order to secure an influential position among the acolytes, the candidates without hope of turning into sages themselves have to butter up to the candidates that do have such hope, and that before the new sage is born.

"So instead of doing nothing we're supposed to become your slaves and lovers?"

Yogiri didn't mean to be provocative, he simply voiced a question he had.

"Hm? Yeah, nothing to do about that. Anyway, I've decided I'll only have one wife. I'm actually a pretty upstanding person, alright? My plan is to find a spouse in the near future. There's a high probability my future wife will be someone from among my eternal slaves, probably a high-rank slave or lover, so starting out at the rank of lover makes for a great head start. I'm telling you, this would have been a great deal for you, Dannoura-san."

The answer Yogiri received felt a little off-point. Looked like Tachibana wasn't a very good listener.

"Do me a favor and reconsider your concept of 'upstanding' afterwards."

Tomochika replied and then sighed deeply.

She did say that he was like this from the start, but she had to admit that she didn't remember him being quite this bad.

"Also, why the confidence? You're skipping out on the training journey that everyone else is doing, aren't you?"

The three classmates that had told them it was their second time in this world held a similar degree of self-confidence. Like Yogiri, Tomochika was starting to suspect Tachibana of being a returnee as well.

"No need for a leveling trip. My class is Dominator, the most powerful class that rules over all."

It appeared Tachibana intended for it to be some kind of big reveal, but to Yogiri it was the same system-nonsense as always.

CHAPTER 24

AREN'T SUPPORT CLASSES WAY TOO VERSATILE IN THIS WORLD!?

We travel back in time to the point when Yogiri's classmates arrived at Kuenza.

With the money they were rewarded for completing the first mission, 1 million en for each of them, they reserved themselves a tavern, where they all discussed their thoughts on the situation they had been thrown into. The one that lead the clan during the first mission was General Yazaki, but now things had calmed down and some students weren't happy with how he had settled things on his own accord.

While that discussion was in progress, Yuuki Tachibana sat at an otherwise empty table, isolated from the rest.

Reason for that was his class: Dominator.

During the first mission's strategy meeting, each candidate's class name became known. They weren't fully aware of their abilities yet, but the name of his class alone sounded overwhelming enough for everyone else to avoid contact.

Understandably so, for the Dominator is a most powerful class capable of ruling not only over humans, but even animals and monsters. However, there are requirements to be met before a creature is placed under one's control.

It wasn't as simple as walking up to someone and activating a skill, but because Tachibana's classmates couldn't possibly know that they avoided him.

Summoned to a different dimension, given close to no knowledge of the world and abandoned by his companions. Normally one would panic in such a situation, but Yuuki wasn't bothered.

Without any particular evidence, Yuuki Tachibana was convinced of being special, the exception to all rules. Accordingly, his mindset was a unique kind of optimistic.

Cause for his mindset was most likely the fact that, in his whole life, he had never experienced failure. The idea of finding himself in an actual crisis was so strange to him, he couldn't even imagine it. This situation, too, didn't trouble him in the slightest.

Without worrying over his future in this new world he looked out of the tavern's window, checking out the female natives walking by. Most of them had faces

reminiscent of Westerners, but every now and then he spotted a Japanese. Feeling confirmed in his preference of Japanese women over foreigners, Tachibana was approached by one of his classmates.

"Hey there. Can we talk?"

"Sure, what's up?"

The one that had walked up to him was Haruhito Ootori.

As far as popularity with girls went, Yuuki and Haruhito were competing at a level far beyond their classmates' reach. Different from Yuuki and his flawless model-like face, the aloof Haruhito was popular thanks to his air of an intellectual and a hint of dreaminess.

It didn't appear like Haruhito even considered being declined, already taking a seat across Yuuki before he replied.

"I'd like to give you some advice."

"Hm? Oh right, you have that one class, what was it again?"

Yuuki tried recalling the name of Haruhito's class, but all he could remember was that it had to do with giving people advice.

"Consultant. Basically the role of providing the information necessary for making difficult decisions."

"Right, Consultant. So, how are you going to consult me?"

"I can help you with properly utilizing your Dominator class. You don't actually know how it works yet, do you?"

"I'll admit that, but I'm a practice over theory kind of person anyway. It's probably something I can figure out on my own after giving it a try."

Yuuki wasn't trying to save face, that was his actual view on it. His optimism knew no

bounds.

"In your case I can see that happening, but I'd say my advice is pretty valuable nonetheless."

"Well, go on then. I'll see whether I'll bother keeping it in mind."

"The power of the Dominator lies in controlling those he has dominated, so first of all you'll have to get a lot of subjects under your control. However, there's two conditions for making people your followers. Their levels can't be higher than yours, and they must agree to becoming your subordinate."

Yuuki already knew about those conditions, which were also the reason he wasn't already out and about dominating slaves. After all, he was still level 1, and it wasn't like there were people running around asking to be dominated.

"And here's where I can help you: the second condition has an exception. You don't necessarily have to get the target's consent. Not surprising, since there wouldn't be any point in giving you the ability to dominate monsters if you couldn't possibly reach mutual agreement with most of them in the first place."

"Hm? That wasn't mentioned in the class description."

The system had a help function, but Yuuki didn't remember seeing anything like what Haruhito was talking about in it.

"Yeah, those descriptions are pretty scarce. I'm guessing those aspects are supposed to be discovered while experimenting with the classes, like you'd usually do in games. So here's how it works: first you fight someone until they are near death, then you step on their head. Do that and they'll be under your control."

Yuuki didn't bother asking how Haruhito knew something like that. He called himself a Consultant and that was enough of an explanation for Yuuki.

"Now, what you should do from here is head to the town's slave market and get as many of the cheapest level one slaves as you can. Slaves with some kind of defect can

go for as cheap as ten thousand en. Doesn't matter how frail or close to dying they are."

"How does that relate to Dominator?"

"You can make slaves your subordinates right away. They're already being sold without concern for their consent, so buying them counts as mutual agreement."

"I see, that'll be an easy way to get followers. And then?"

Yuuki didn't feel like thinking it through himself and instead let Haruhito suggest what to do.

"Put them into groups of five and send them hunting outside town, you can just order them to once they're under your control. Doesn't matter how dumb they may be, they'll move according to your orders. Even if they're already half dead they can still cling to monsters to slow them down, so if you have them stake their lives on hunting monsters they should be able to drive a weaker one to near death and dominate it. It's no big deal if they end up killing it; since this world is constantly troubled by monsters most of them have some kind of bounty on them, so you can always expect a reward from somewhere."

"Wait, so I don't need to be the one stepping on their heads?"

"Exactly, that's the great thing about Dominator: Your slaves become part of you. That's also why half the experience points they gain from killing monsters is transferred to you."

"Hm, so just by buying some slaves and sending them out to hunt I'll gain money and experience, while they turn into a huge army... Alright."

Yuuki stood up, thinking that the sooner he bought some slaves the better.

Your average Japanese would have some qualms about purchasing slaves, but Yuuki didn't feel any reluctance whatsoever. To him, other humans had always been mere side characters at best.

"I recommend traveling to Hayabusa once you're done here. Thanks to being the heart

of the trade routes around here there's a huge selection of slaves, and not far from it are ruins full of monsters. Perfect city for raising your level and increasing your slave count."

"Sounds good. By the way, why give me all these tips? There's no real benefit for you in it, is there?"

It wasn't like Yuuki was suspicious of Haruhito, he was too used to having the world turn around him for that. He was just curious.

"Felt like our chance of producing a sage wasn't looking so good, so I decided to help out a promising classmate and improve our odds. Nothing more, nothing less."

"Fair enough, you're betting on the right candidate then. Calling out to me was the right decision."

With confidence as ample as ever, Yuuki Tachibana left the tavern behind.



"Aren't support classes way too versatile in this world!?"

When Yuuki finished his explanation, Tomochika was the first to raise her voice, most likely thinking of the concierge Celestina.

"So your level and slave count are increasing even now?"

Yogiri could see where Yuuki's confidence was coming from if everything he had said was true.

"Yup. Although compared to my level I'm fairly lacking in battle experience, so I was actually just about to head out into some ruins to fight some monsters."

Even though none of it was his own idea, and certainly not his own power, Yuuki was overflowing with confidence.

"So how about it, Dannoura-san. You regret not having accepted now, don't you? Too late to become my lover, but I'll gladly accept you as a mid-tier——"

"Not at all, thank you."

Tomochika replied before Yuuki even finished speaking and promptly continued.

"I mean, those three girls from earlier were total beauties already. Why get hung up on someone like me?"

"You're not wrong, but if I had to put it straightforward... I'm after your body. Already was before we were summoned to this world."

"I just received the worst confession ever!"

"You sure are popular."

Yogiri spoke, he was quite impressed.

"Ahh, right, the other three were the same..."

Tomochika recalled Hanakawa's group and dejectedly dropped her shoulders; it started to look like everyone who liked her was a jerk.

"I guess it's a difficult decision to make so suddenly. Luckily for you, I'm generous; let's have another talk after everything's settled. I'm looking forward to a reasonable response."

So spoke Yuuki as he stood up with a slightly perplexed face. It looked like he was genuinely baffled by Tomochika's response, but decided to allow her to change her mind on her own.

"In the end it stopped being funny."

When Yuuki finally left the hotel, those were Tomochika's first words.

"Well, as long as he doesn't turn hostile on us we can just ignore him."

Yogiri certainly didn't look forward to coincidentally meeting each other in this city during their stay here, but since Yuuki didn't mean any immediate harm towards them he decided to leave him to his own devices.

"But say, maybe becoming his companion wouldn't have been such a bad deal? Might be safer than traveling with me."

"Takatou-kun, are you trying to make me upset?"

"I'm not following. Sorry, I guess."

She actually looked upset already, so Yogiri apologized just in case.

"I'm not sure what to think of such an apology, but come on, telling me to travel with someone that flat-out admitted to being after my body is just——"

Tomochika suddenly stopped, having come to a realization.

"Actually, wasn't that your motivation as well!"

It appeared Tomochika had recalled the original reason they were currently traveling together.

CHAPTER 25

LETTING HIM FONDLE AND LICK A LITTLE

Two full days had passed since checking into the hotel.

Yogiri spent the whole time sleeping while Tomochika lived as a shut-in. It was a peaceful two days.

The hotel rooms had a comfortable temperature, its lighting was freely adjustable and even food could be ordered all the way to the room with a quick call to the front desk.

On a side note, while the entirety of Hayabusa was equipped with a telephone network, it was impossible to make calls to other cities. The world had not yet invented wireless communication networks.

Moving on, the bathroom had a flush toilet, the sink's faucet worked without issue and even toilet paper was available. Secluding herself in one of those rooms for a while longer could have made her forget she was in a different world.

"I wonder how long I can just live like this."

Tomochika spoke to no one in particular as she vacantly gazed outside.

Her room was on the 5th floor, but all those buildings as tall as the hotel were blocking most of the room's view. Despite how comfortable it was, spending all day inside with such a feeling of being caged up started feeling a little depressing.

[Until the youngster wakes up, probably.]

Mokomoko, who was floating in the air next to her, answered.

"Can you check whether he's still asleep? You can go through walls, right?"

[Oh I certainly can, no difficulties there. But no, too scary.]

"So scary you can't even take a quick peek?"

[Oh, when he's asleep he's especially scary. Entering his room without permission is madness, who knows what might happen.]

"Not like I'm telling you to go wake him up."

[Trust me, best to just wait for him to wake up on his own. Let sleeping dogs lie, don't wake a slumbering child, you know what they say.]

"But there's nothing to do until he wakes up, is there?"

They had come to this city to meet up with their classmates, and because they had no other business here there wasn't much for her to do in the meantime.

[Oh? So you had plans for something to do in a room with just the two of you?]

Mokomoko floated up close with a grin as wide as her already wide face, and Tomochika replied with bright red cheeks.

"W-what are you saying! As if we would do... t-that!"

[I should be the one asking what you're saying, obviously you have to get a good grip on him or he'll break up with you.]

"Breaking up you say, it's not like we're dating..."

Although Tomochika wasn't sure how to describe their current relationship either.

[Luckily he has already expressed interest in your chest. For starters, how about letting him fondle and lick a little?]

"Stop with that, idiot!"

[Hm? Doesn't enticing him with your body sound the simplest? That way he'd also have a reason to continue protecting you.]

"No no, It's not like I'm only trying to get him to keep protecting me. I believe there's a way I can help as well... somehow."

[As I said, there's a very easy way for you to help him.]

"I'm glad I can't see what you're imagining!"

[Why get so worked up over it? I'll have you know, I myself have spent a lot of time sneaking into bedrooms at night on my search for strong blood with which to enrich our family.]

"Shouldn't the guy be the one sneaking around!? Now I feel sorry for my ancestors!"

Tomochika couldn't help but feel like she had to apologize to all of history's great men. Having a woman as massive as Mokomoko sneak into their rooms must have been a terrifying experience.

[Don't be worried because it's your first time, I'll teach you everything there is to know!]

"How do I look up 'How to exorcise a guardian spirit' in this world!?"

A grueling image started coming afloat in Tomochika's mind, but she successfully shouted it away.

[I suppose if it's absolutely necessary I'd even leave you two alone for a while.]

"Does it really take that much to get you to leave me alone!?"

[What kind of guardian spirit would I be if I abandoned you on some whim every now and then?]

Tomochika couldn't see the discussion taking a turn for the better and instead turned her head back to the window and sighed.

"Anyway, staying in here for much longer sounds pretty unbearable, I think I'll at least take a stroll... wait, what's that?"

Something strange was happening outside.

The main street right below Tomochika's window was getting boisterous and all the horse-drawn carriages hurriedly steered to the sides to halt.

Screams and shouts; the pedestrians were frantically scattering into whichever side alley was closest. All of them had their heads turned in the same direction they ran away from, and when Tomochika looked that way herself she saw several vehicles making their ways across the street at full speed.

"Huh? Are those trucks?"

Three massive cars were driving down the road without any concern for the horse-drawn carriages still in the middle of the street, several of them getting thrown aside as if hit by a snow plow and crashing into the buildings lined up along the road. Some of the pedestrians were too slow with their escape and ended up squashed between carriage carts and walls.

[Hmm, armored vehicles used for transporting military reinforcements have a similar air around them.]

The three huge cars made their way past the hotel with engines roaring so loud they bordered on noise pollution. Tomochika couldn't tell what the trucks were carrying, but with their angular shape and robust appearance military troops weren't out of the question.

[Those... are bad news. Teeming with the smell of death.]

"Even I can tell that much after what just happened!"

Without any warning the main street had been turned into a living hell.

The armored vehicles had strewn death everywhere they passed by as they charged through the street.

[I meant whatever they are carrying; their insides were making the presence of death that was shrouding the cars themselves look like a joke.]

"What's wrong with this world! This isn't normal, people are dying way too randomly!"

She could understand if this world was simply more dangerous than her old one, but this went beyond reasonable. Just like back at the steam train, it felt as if people's lives weren't valued whatsoever.

[Maybe that was related to the sages as well. Even if armored cars weren't uncommon in this dimension, the ones that just passed by definitely felt reminiscent of our world.]

Tomochika closed the curtains and sat down on her bed.

Continuing to look on wouldn't have made the disastrous situation better, only her mood worse.

[Ah, didn't you say you wanted to go for a stroll outside?]

"Thank you, but no thank you, I'm fine. Ahh, this room really does have it all, have I mentioned that I could stay here forever?"

After seeing that macabre spectacle there wasn't any desire left to go outside.

[That may be the safest course of action, but, well.]

But Mokomoko's tone didn't make it sound like she was on Tomochika's side.

"What? You're making it difficult for me to enjoy my shut-in life."

[I hope you realize that you can't shut yourself away in this room forever.]

"Nonono, we're living in a cruel world, okay!? The kind of cruel where you go outside for a walk and get run over by a truck!"

[Ah, but can you say with confidence that those trucks aren't going to come crashing into this room?]

"I'm having a hard time even imagining that, so..."

[Well, that one was an example, but there really is some foe lurking in the corridor actually, probably waiting for you to come out.]

"...Wait, what? Why? Did we do something?"

[You did a whole lot, actually. Went around killing classmates, thugs, a sage, train raiders, monsters, a dragon... at this point it would be stranger for not even one of them to come targeting you, don't you think?]

Mokomoko replied, sounding a little irked.

Tomochika most likely wouldn't have been able to resist an attacker on her own, but there was no way for whoever was lurking outside to be sure of that.

"Any idea who it is?"

[I can tell that he or she is at the end of the corridor, but I can't see the actual person.]

"You can't see them but know there is someone?"

[Of course, as your guardian spirit I'm quite sensitive to hostile intent aimed at you. I can't grasp it as well as the youngster, but I can spot a would-be attacker any time of the day. I was thinking that there's no need to take action if we're only being watched, but it looks like your stalker is getting tired of waiting. Probably won't be long until this room is getting raided.]

"What am I supposed to do if that happens!? Ah! I'll call Takatou-kun and wake him up!"

There was a high chance of being attacked if she left her room to go wake him up

herself, and if the person wasn't visible because of a magic spell or special item then there was little Tomochika could do against them on her own. However, she was certain that Yogiri would be able to handle it.

She hurried to the room's telephone and rang up the neighboring room.

"Yes, hello?"

"That was quick, were you already awake!?"

"Just got out of bed. Something noisy went down outside and woke me up."

Tomochika gave him a quick rundown of the situation.

"I see. Alright, I'll be there in a second."

"Erm, I know I'm the one that asked you to come, but are you sure you can just walk over?"

"Should be fine if not seeing them is all there is to it."

It didn't sound like he had anything to base his confidence on, but just hearing those words gave Tomochika a sense of relief.

CHAPTER 26

PRESERVING THE CRIME SCENE

After the call ended, the first thing Yogiri did was drink a glass of water.

After all, he had been asleep without food or drinks ever since they moved to their rooms. He was also fairly hungry, but thanks to all the sleep he got he was in perfect shape nonetheless. After finishing his drink he opened the door, left his room and stepped out into the empty corridor.

However, it only appeared empty.

Yogiri focused his concentration on the other end of the corridor and spotted some black fog there, forming the shape of a diagonal line towards Tomochika's room. Because it wasn't concrete intent to kill, nor aimed at Yogiri, it was only dimly visible to him, but he could tell that there really was someone lurking ahead of him.

Whoever it was, they didn't move despite Yogiri leaving his room, only continuing to transmit their killing intent towards Tomochika's room. The person most likely didn't even consider they might get discovered.

Yogiri used his power.

thud

Something fell over and shortly after a collapsed girl became visible.

Without paying her much heed Yogiri knocked on Tomochika's door.

"It's me."

The door swung open right away, revealing the flustered Tomochika.

"Hurry up, get inside!"

She seemed still on guard for enemies and Yogiri, doing his best to share her enthusiasm, promptly entered the room.

"There really was someone, a woman."

Yogiri spoke as he took a seat in the room's guest chair.

"Oh, could you see her then?"

"Not so much that I saw her, but I could tell where the hostility was originating from. Wasn't too far from this room's door, a little down the corridor next to the opposite wall. Looked like she didn't have any interest in me, didn't make a move when I left my room."

"Ah, Mekomoko-san said the same, that the killing intent was targeting me. Honestly, I don't think I've done anything to make someone resent me though."

Quite indeed, all the enemies they had faced so far were killed solely by Yogiri.

[Don't be a fool, it's not like a bystander can tell who of you two is the one doing the killing.]

"But then it would still be strange for the killing intent to be focused only on Dannoura-san. Doesn't that sound more like revenge or something?"

He had some ideas for what might have been the motive, but nothing concrete.

"Anyway, for now it's good that you managed to come over. What should we do next?"

[Ah, I see I see. Very well, if my absence is truly necessary then I shall take my leave now. You two may enjoy yourselves!]

"That's not what I'm talking about!"

"?"

Yogiri couldn't follow the conversation and tilted his head as he looked at the blushing

Tomochika.

"L-let's forget about that. So, now what?"

She expertly forced the discussion back on topic and Yogiri went along with it.

"Mhm, right, first off I should make a call."

Yogiri got up, went to the room's telephone and made a call to the front desk.

"A woman collapsed on the fifth floor's corridor, thought she might need help."

He smoothly settled the matter and returned to his chair.

"Wait, huh? What was that about?"

"I thought it might look strange if I pretend not to have seen anything. Not like I can very well claim I didn't notice the dead body while walking through the corridor."

There wasn't anyone other than him and the hiding woman when he walked to Tomochika's room, but depending on the flow of events he might be suspected, so acting as natural as possible should have been for the best.

"Dead body?"

"Yeah, killed her."

"You already did!?"

"I don't think there's much to say against killing someone hiding their appearance and lurking around."

No matter what the actual circumstances were, such a kind of person was just too suspicious, Yogiri thought, so he took care of her right away.

"Well, sure, but weren't you curious about why she was hiding there and stuff?"

[I would have preferred if we inquired about any background relations first, if it turns out some organization is after us it might get troublesome.]

"You say that, but killing is all I can do. Not the best skill for interrogating someone."

There was that one time he experimented with going easy on his opponents, but applying it in a way that allowed him to extract information out of people would have been difficult. Threats required an example and explanation, but after suffering an irreversible injury any hope for being saved would have been crushed.

Additionally, even if they had tried questioning her with instant death as threat, they would have been dealing with someone capable of erasing their appearance -- who knew what other powers she might have held.

Thinking about it calmly, killing her was most likely the right choice.

"Actually, I guess it would be strange for me to ignore someone lying on the floor."

With that, Yogiri headed back out on the floor and Tomochika followed.

The hotel staff still hadn't arrived, and the girl was still lying in the same position as before.

Now Tomochika saw her as well and raised her voice.

"Huh, that really does look like she just collapsed."

"You know, and I might not be one to talk, but you sure are calm about this."

They had seen worse looking corpses up until now, but even then Tomochika had never appeared particularly distraught. Given that she was a girl, Yogiri always expected her to be more shaken and frightened in general.

"Guess I'm used to it, although I'm not sure that's something I should be happy about."

[All humans die eventually. Don't expect the daughter of a family of born warriors to

be unnerved so easily.]

"It's not that I'm looking at it with the death of all things in mind or anything, and actually I'd say I am fairly shocked... Hm? Hey, do you think it's fine if we take a look at her face?"

It seemed like Tomochika noticed something after taking a look at the body, so Yogiri walked up to it, crouched down and lifted the face up.

"Erm, I was thinking we might not be supposed to touch her, preserving the crime scene and all."

"We can just say we were trying to help a collapsed person."

The woman had blonde hair and a face blessed by natural beauty. After looking at her straight up Yogiri realized as well: they had met her before; and Tomochika remembered where.

"That was one of Tachibana-kun's followers, I think Erika was her name?"

"Do you think Tachibana is the one behind this? Eh, even if he isn't, this will turn into a problem, he'll think we're looking for a fight."

One could say they were the ones that got challenged, but they still ended up taking hostile measures against him.

[I don't know what powers he possesses as Dominator, but I'd assume he has a grasp of his underlings' undertakings.]

"Tachibana also lives in this hotel, right? We should probably get out of here then."

While Yogiri and the rest were talking the hotel staff finally arrived, along with someone that looked like a doctor. They put Erika on a stretcher and quickly carried her away. The situation wasn't thought of as a crime yet, so there wasn't anyone reminiscent of a policeman with them.

And like that, the two sage candidates decided to leave the hotel.

CHAPTER 27

WITH A LEVEL TEN TIMES AS HIGH THAT MUCH IS TO BE EXPECTED

The Dominator class allowed one to know what each slave was up to, but not all of them simultaneously -- too much information would have to be taken in at once. Consequently, the base setting was for the Dominator to be notified only upon major events.

"Hm? Erika's perception stopped transmitting?"

Yuuki Tachibana picked up on his Slave Management skill's notification while being on the receiving end of a vicious claw attack. At this time, Yuuki was facing a monster that could only be described as a four-armed insect-human.

The monster's body was roughly three meters in height and covered by a jet black carapace all over; its strength would have ripped apart a regular human with ease, but had practically no effect on Yuuki.

"As expected of Master! A monster of the hundredth floor doesn't stand a chance!"

He was currently in the deepest stratum of the ruins not far from the city he was staying at. The enemies here were supposed to offer him some real battle experience, but the difference in strength was so great there was little for him to learn from it.

The one cheering him on from the side was Stefanie, a high-rank slave girl. Yuuki was a fan of her sensual brunette hair and cute face, so he usually kept her close by.

"Well, this thing's level 1000, right? With a level ten times as high that much is to be expected."

Yuuki's level had already reached 10,000.

Normal people's levels ranged from one to five, warriors that made hunting monsters their profession usually peaked at level 50, and if someone trained all their life they might reach level 99, the human limit, but to go beyond that, a special class was

needed; and Dominator was that special class.

Yuuki had reached a level that high with hardly any effort. He commanded slaves, had them slay monsters, gained experience points and bounty rewards, and purchased more slaves. He subjugated criminal gangs, had them attack merchants, and trampled entire villages when spotting one outside a sage's protection. Whenever one of the monsters didn't quite die it was added to his slaves, which he then sent out to further increase his follower count until even animals and insects were under his control. The whole process was set to auto-pilot, meaning the number of slaves he controlled was increasing rapidly even right now.

"Answer me, who are you!"

The manlike rhinoceros beetle took some distance with a back step and raised a voice filled with dismay. It seemed like he couldn't believe a mere human was unconcerned by his attacks.

"Oh, so there were monsters that could talk?"

"Lord. After passing a certain level even monsters acquire a hint of intelligence, becoming able to comprehend human language."

The one that spoke this time was Euphemia, the silver haired girl next to Stefanie and the other follower he took along for this expedition. Euphemia was of a race called half-demon; Yuuki picked her up when he raided a village in the Hakua ancient woodlands. He decided to make her a high-ranking slave because she was particularly beautiful, even when compared to the other half-demons.

"I see. Might use him as a low-tier slave then."

Yuuki split his slaves into four ranks: high-tier, mid-tier, low-tier and laborers. Managing them all himself was impossible, so he set up a hierarchy in which the higher ranking slaves handled the lower ranking ones.

However, his slave count had long increased beyond a number that could be managed with a four layer system, it was just about time to revise his current management structure.

"A slave, he says! How dare you, a puny human!"

"Let's see, Flare Bomb. Was that right?"

Yuuki chanted a spell, more or less.

The Dominator class only offered him skills for the sake of managing his slaves, but among those skills was one that made it possible to borrow the skills of his slaves. As such, Yuuki could use every single skill his slaves possessed.

And like that, explosions wreaked havoc all throughout the insectman's body, a gaping hole opening in its chest. With his limbs blasted away only his head and torso were left over, which fell to the ground with a thump.

Yuuki leisurely walked up to him and stepped on his head, completing the domination process.

"Extra Heal."

Stefanie used her magic and just a few moments later the insectman had recovered. An easy task for a healer like her, whose powers had been strengthened by Yuuki.

"How many floors are there in these ruins?"

"There are 150."

The dominated monster replied in an obedient tone.

"Alright, then descend to the bottom of these ruins and gather new followers as you do so. Once you've reached the 150th floor, head out to Hakua and continue there."

"Very well."

Without wasting even a second the insectman acknowledged Yuuki's orders and went on his way. In the case of ambiguous orders the slaves execute their tasks on their own discretion.

"These ruins were supposed to offer some combat practice, but I'm really not feeling

it."

If he continued raising his level without actually taking action himself he may find himself unprepared when facing some crisis in the future. With that in mind he decided to explore these ruins, but in the end there wasn't much point in having come here. At first he was fairly curious about these ruins left behind by an ancient civilization of a different dimension, but after several days of exploration he started growing tired of them.

"Lord, haven't you already transcended beyond requiring real battle experience? I believe just reigning as the magnificent monarch you are destined to be would be a reasonable course of action."

"Now then, I wonder what happened to Erika."

Euphemia raised her voice, but Yuuki had his mind elsewhere.

He had put his favorite slaves into their own group of personal guards, both the followers with him right now making up two of those five special slaves. The other three were on standby at the hotel, Erika having been one of them.

Curious about what happened he brought up Erika's action log, which showed how she equipped herself with a hidden weapon, left her room on the hotel's highest floor and headed to Tomochika Dannoura's room on the fifth floor. There, she used the Conceal Body skill and lurked nearby his classmate's room. The skill Yuuki was using, Action Log, didn't do much in telling him what her intent was, but he could guess that she was waiting for Tomochika to come out of her room. Erika spent quite a while waiting in that spot, until eventually Yogiri Takatou left his room. Shortly after that her memory stopped.

"I don't get it, why'd she die? Some attack from behind?"

Action Log only allowed him to watch his slaves' conduct from their perspective, so it was impossible for him to tell what was going on behind Erika at the time. There was a good chance she fell victim to some stealth attack, but there were no signs hinting at anything like that.

"That's certainly baffling. To think a forest assassin like Erika, who was granted further

power by you, Lord, would be caught off guard. Even if someone managed to surprise her by some fluke, I can't imagine her being assassinated."

Assassins possessed the skill Vigilance, which made it possible to have a grasp even on the surrounding's outside one's vision. It was unthinkable for Erika to not have it activated while performing an ambush.

"Yeah, and I'd also like to know what she was ambushing Dannoura-san for."

Slaves were bound to obey any order they were given, but when they had no specific task to fulfill they could decide their courses of action themselves. They were always aiming for those actions to be beneficial to their master, but without asking them there was no way to figure out what exactly they were hoping to achieve.

"If I may take a guess."

Euphemia responded again, her manner of speech as stiff as ever.

"Go ahead."

"Possibly because you brought up making Dannoura-sama your lover."

"And how does that have to do with Erika deciding to ambush her?"

"One possibility might be that she deemed her unworthy of you, Lord. Alternatively, perhaps she decided to kidnap her for you."

"Hmm. But slaves always aim to move in a way that wouldn't cause their master problems, why would she kill someone I've shown interest in?"

"I can't answer that very well without having seen Dannoura-sama myself, but maybe Erika had some reason to believe that her death would be best for you."

"I see, so unless I explicitly tell a slave to refrain from doing something they might randomly come up with it themselves and do it even if it goes against my actual plans,

good to know."

"Yes. What we believe to be right has a possibility of not aligning with your intentions."

It appeared things weren't guaranteed to always go the way he intended, Yuuki decided to keep that in mind.

"Oh well, no way to figure out what she was thinking now that she's dead. Shame, she was expensive."

"If the lord wishes for a new forest human, there are some settlements nearby that could be raided."

"Settlements like yours, you mean? Are you trying to tell me something?"

"Absolutely not. I was merely raising a fact."

"Oh well, not like it matters. I think I'll have Lisa and Chelsey inherit Erika's dying wish and capture Dannoura-san."

Lisa and Chelsey were the other two personal guards left behind at the hotel.

Yuuki gave them the order right away; with a person dying right in front of her room there was a good chance Tomochika would already be vacating the hotel.

No matter the method, Yuuki was set on getting Tomochika Dannoura into his hands. There was no way he, the Dominator, wouldn't be able to get the woman he wanted. However, getting desperate over a single woman didn't seem very Dominator-like either. That was why he didn't push the matter when she declined him, but now that Erika had died he no longer cared. As the absolute ruler he was supposed to be surrounded by the most supreme women at all times, and unlike a few days ago, now there was a need to replace Erika.

"Could it be that Dannoura-sama herself is the culprit?"

"No clue, but once she's dominated things should clear up. Let's take her outside town first of all."

Hayabusa was under the celestial protection of the saints, which put a limit on certain powers bestowed by them. Domination fell under that limit, making it impossible to dominate people within town.

Yuuki started heading to the elevator to get out of the ruins.

He had no doubts that by the time he arrived on the surface, Tomochika would be in his personal guards' custody.

CHAPTER 28

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU KILLED ICE!?

When Tomochika returned to her room she packed her things right away. Her belongings were few enough to fit in a backpack, so it didn't take too much time.

[Can we talk for a second?]

Tomochika was just about to leave the room when her guardian spirit, Mokomoko, spoke up.

"What? If I don't hurry up I'll make Takatou-kun wait."

Yogiri most likely didn't require much time himself, and they were supposed to meet up in the corridor after getting ready.

[Don't worry about that, tell him you needed more time because you're a girl and he won't even question it. It won't be a long talk, don't worry.]

"Well, alright then."

There most likely was value in whatever Mokomoko wanted to talk about if she was going to bring it up under such circumstances, so Tomochika agreed and took a seat on the bed.

[We don't know what they're after, but this time someone is targeting you in particular. Sure the youngster can perceive killing intent, but it looks like that perception loses a good deal of precision when it's not him that's being targeted. Might be that I'm better at sensing danger to you than he is.]

"Yeah, I already guessed that just because Takatou-kun is safe from danger the same doesn't have to go for me."

[There's also the matter of you two not being guaranteed to always be together. What I'm saying is that you need to become able to handle this world on your own.]

"Well sure, but there's nothing I can do about that, is there?"

Tomochika didn't possess any of the powers bestowed by this world's system, nor a special power like that of Yogiri. Those degrees of strength weren't something a normal person could reach just through effort.

[I've given your situation some thought myself, but indeed, there's no way for you to become that strong right away. For the time being you'll have to get by with just your current strength.]

"You say that, but am I strong enough for that right now?"

Tomochika was fairly familiar with martial arts thanks to her family being so closely connected to it, but she only ever practiced her skills on her relatives. Present day Japan didn't offer a lot of opportunities to put one's martial arts skills to the test, so she couldn't actually tell how strong she truly was.

[You'd easily win against someone who only had physical strength going for them, a knife wielding maniac shouldn't pose a problem either. Against some martial arts master I suppose you'd be able to stall for time and find a way to escape.]

"That... sounds pretty amazing."

[In terms of our own world, yes. However, the arts of House Dannoura won't do much against this world's system and skills and what not.]

"Alright, so what should I do? You brought this up because you know a way to change that, right?"

[We shall lift your seal.]

"This turned really suspicious really quickly!... B-but maybe I'm interested, go on!"

She hesitated for a moment, but her curiosity soon outweighed her feeling of being made fun of. If there was some secret potential lurking within her, then maybe it was possible for her to be of help after all.

"So, what will happen after lifting this seal? Do I get some kind of super power? The old me would have thought you're just screwing with me, but after seeing Takatou-kun's power I guess you might be serious."

[Mhmm, now I feel bad for raising your hopes. You won't awaken to some special power, you'll only gain the mindset required to kill people.]

"That's all!?"

The resolution to kill a person was certainly a kind of strength itself, but Tomochika was expecting something much greater, so her disappointment was rather great as well.

[Don't go 'That's all!?' now, just executing an attack with the preparedness to kill someone makes it much stronger already. A normal person can't kill that easily, no matter how resolute they may be. There's always some part in them that subconsciously tries to avoid dealing a fatal attack.]

"Isn't that a matter of mental fortitude then? What's that got to do with a seal?"

[You've heard of tsukimono lineages, right? House Dannoura is similar to that: all its descendants are born with an offense oriented soul. You included.]

(TN: Tsukimono lineages: wealthy families said to have gained prosperity by possessing people.)

"It just keeps getting less credible!"

The whole story didn't sound very believable to Tomochika. It was true that her family was heavily invested in martial arts, but there wasn't anything that extreme about it as far as she knew.

[Is that really something you can say after having ripped out your father's eyes at the age of ten? In that regard you're more promising than your older sister, if you ask me.]

"Pretty sure my dad's eyes are in perfect shape though!"

[Erm, well, you know how it is, he got artificial eyes a long time ago.]

"That's way too obvious of a lie! You're making this up as you go, aren't you!?"

[Mhm, I thought steering your character in that kind of direction would fit the whole 'the wild beast within' story, but looks like it's not working out.]

"Who cares about my entertainment value right now!?"

[Well anyway, instead of awkwardly relying on some weapon or skill you should just make use of your innate offensive nature, that'll serve you better.]

"Fine, so how are we going to lift that seal?"

Just being turned more violent wasn't what Tomochika had been hoping for, but she reminded herself that it was better than nothing.

[The seal is based on a key phrase. To lift it you have to say a special incantation.]

And the incantation was as follows:

The maddened of all realms know not of their madness

The blinded of all beings know not of their blindness

Life upon life upon life upon life begins in darkness

Death upon death upon death upon death ends in darkness

"Isn't that what they call eighth grade syndrome!?"

[That's a paragraph of Kukai's Hizou Kuron, alright? Happens a lot in martial arts,

having to chant some esoteric mantra. Anyway, go ahead and recite that.]

(TN: Hizou Kuron: a book written by Kukai, famous Buddha of the 8th century.)

"Isn't that pretty long? Doesn't seem very easy to use in emergency situations... Wait, aren't we making Takatou-kun wait too long!"

[Very well, let's leave things at that for now. After chanting the mantra the effect stays active for a while so just recite it whenever you're about to head out.]

Tomochika mumbled the incantation as she got to her feet. Nothing felt different when she finished, but maybe that was for the best.

She left her room and met up with Yogiri.



Yogiri and Tomochika, both with all their belongings with them, headed towards the emergency stairs. For now they had only decided that continuing to stay at the hotel was dangerous, the matter of where to go after leaving it was postponed until later.

[I agree that the emergency stairs are safer than taking the elevator, but won't the enemy realize where we went right away? How about jumping out of the window, no way they'll see that coming.]

"You do remember that we're on the fifth floor, right?"

Mokomoko's proposal was a little too absurd for Tomochika.

[I remember a guy from our original world that could jump from this height without problem.]

"Are you sure he was human!?"

"There might be something like an escape slide around here actually, but we don't really have the time to search for something like that. On top of that it would stand out pretty badly, not the best method for secretly escaping."

"Yeah, the emergency stairs should be safe enough."

The hotel was built in the shape of an L. To the right of their room was an elevator, to the left a corner. After going around that corner and walking to the end of the corridor there should have been some emergency stairs.

The two walked through the corridor while focusing all their attention on their surroundings, thanks to which they noticed the sudden sound of footsteps right away. Someone was coming from around the corner, and before long a woman appeared before them.

"My oh my, what might have you two so flustered?"

The woman spoke with a gentle smile, wearing a fluttery white dress and carrying an excessively ornamented staff. Yogiri didn't feel any immediate killing intent, but he doubted a person that appeared with such timing could be unrelated to the people targeting them. Without bothering with politeness, Yogiri threw her a question.

"And you are?"

"Lisa of Yuuki-kun's personal guards. Don't let my looks deceive you now, I'm actually the group leader."

The woman replied with a completely calm, carefree voice. So she truly was part of Yuuki's followers -- not one of the girls Yogiri and Tomochika had met before, however.

"What do you want?"

The woman didn't make them wait with her response, although it wasn't a verbal one: Ice pillars. That's what they suddenly found themselves surrounded by, caged in even -- thin pillars of ice blocking all four directions in the form of a fence.

"Yuuki-kun ordered me to take Dannoura-san with me, so if you just let me do exactly that we won't have any prob——"

Yogiri kicked the ice, upon which it shattered and formed an opening just wide enough for a person to pass through.

"Huh? Are these really brittle or something?"

Tomochika carelessly tried punching a pillar herself, but threw up her hands and screamed when she ended up with the same result one would get from hitting a wall.

"So cold! What did you do!? These are super tough!"

"Tried killing the part of ice that I kicked, looks like it worked."

It appeared that Yogiri's power also worked on objects created by magic.

"What do you mean you killed ice!? Are you getting philosophical again!?"

Tomochika, albeit shocked, followed Yogiri on his way out of the cage of ice while Lisa could only stare at them in disbelief; their escape wasn't within her calculations.

Yogiri now knew for sure that she was some kind of assassin sent by Yuuki, so killing her would have been fine, but then they would remain in the dark about what's going on once more.

"What the hell is going on!?"

Lisa shouted in confusion as she raised her staff and pointed it towards Yogiri and Tomochika. The tip of her staff started glowing, then began producing a massive icicle floating in the air. She was most likely planning to fire it at them, in which case the ice clump's sharp tip and massive weight would easily turn them into dead piles of meat.

Yogiri was preoccupied with how to ask her about what was going on and as such failed to react in time. The spell was cast and even if he killed the sorceress now, there was a good chance the ice block would still be fired. With that in mind Yogiri used his power not on the woman, but on the huge icicle.

Without a moment's delay it cracked, shattered and then vanished before it even hit the ground.

"Hii-!"

Lisa squeaked in a scared voice as she slowly stepped backwards.

Now that she directly attacked them there was little to criticize Yogiri for if he killed her, but instead he turned his eyes to her staff. It was conspicuously big, but perhaps that was necessary for magic. Since he could kill her any time he decided to try killing her staff first.

He used his power and with a snap the staff split in the middle, lost its glow and cracked, its gem-decorated tip dropping to the ground.

Witnessing that, Lisa sunk to her knees, her eyes wide open with fear. Although too late, it seemed she finally realized that the person before her was of a different caliber than she was familiar with.

"Can you use magic without a staff?"

"N-no, I can't!"

She answered instantly -- the right choice in her current position, for Yogiri intended to kill her the moment she turned out to make it difficult to deal with her.

CHAPTER 29

JUST WHAT KIND OF BATTLES WAS MY FAMILY PLANNING TO TAKE ON...?

"Hm, but the last magic user we met didn't use a staff."

He already forgot the name, but Yogiri recalled the one time a classmate destroyed their bus without using anything like a staff.

"I-I'm a Wand Master. I can extract magic power from staves and wands, but casting magic without them is impossible for me."

The cowering Lisa explained timidly but earnestly.

Her class could cast many powerful and swift magical attacks, but only as long as the equipped tool had them installed, so to speak.

"Looks like I can render our enemies powerless as long as they depend on some weapon, although I doubt that'll happen that often."

It was unlikely that a lot of their future opponents were going to rely on a tool to such an extent; Yogiri believed they got lucky this time.

[Opponents like these usually have another hidden weapon on them somewhere, might be unsafe to keep her alive.]

Yogiri faced Mocomoko and replied, not giving a care to how strange his sudden response must seem to Lisa, who couldn't see nor hear Mocomoko.

"If I went around killing people just for having the potential to be dangerous there'd soon be no one left alive around me, you know."

He didn't enjoy murder, it was just that using his power for self defense meant the other party's death. He didn't hesitate to kill, but neither did he go out of his way to

murder someone.

Yogiri turned back to Lisa.

"You look like you've got an idea already, but here's the deal: I can kill someone just by thinking about it. If you try to pull any tricks you die, that's the position you're in. If you understand then I'll be asking some questions. Alright?"

"Understood."

Lisa's nervousness could be heard in her voice; the air of looking down on some kids she was giving off earlier had disappeared completely. A single misstep meant death, and she could feel it with her whole being.

"If you're a Wand Master then that earlier staff wasn't the only one you've got on you, was it? Where are your reserves?"

In response to that, Lisa pulled a pen sized stick out of her stout cleavage and placed it on the floor.

"Why hide it there of all places!? And Takatou-kun, don't take such a thorough look!"

As usual, their emergency situation didn't stop Tomochika from being the same as always.

"I was just impressed she managed to hide it there."

[But if she has wands of such a size then she might very well be hiding them all over her body. Should we have her strip?]

"Not that I've ever tried to, but killing her clothes would make that easy enough."

"Nonono, you're joking, right?"

There were several things that Tomochika found difficult to believe just now.

"You never complained about killing anyone, but stripping them is a no?"

Yogiri couldn't quite agree with her viewpoint, but decided it wasn't a matter to argue over and moved on.

"Alright, next question. You said you were ordered to take along Dannoura-san, and it looks like you've given up on that now, but aren't those orders absolute? I'm pretty sure I heard something about slaves going crazy and throwing away their lives just to fulfill their tasks."

"Only labor slaves, who don't have any other uses, are made to put their lives on the line like that. High-rank slaves like me are valuable personnel and as such told to worry about staying alive first and foremost."

"How about companions? If you're the leader of the personal guard group then I'm guessing there are more of you?"

"Why yes of course, there are more alright."

Together with those words, something suddenly dropped from the ceiling. That something appeared to be targeting Tomochika, but instead crashed into the floor: just now, Tomochika had grabbed it mid air and then firmly slammed it to the ground.

[Mhm. I see it's already proving useful.]

The something that had fallen from the ceiling and landed on the floor turned out to be a young girl, whose neck was now bent at a fatal angle.

The technique Tomochika just performed consisted of first getting a hold of the girl's body by driving one hand into her windpipe and the other's fingers into her eye sockets, then jamming her head into the floor.

"Just what kind of battles was my family planning to take on when they invented anti-air techniques...?"

[Being prepared for all possible scenarios is the way of House Dannoura!]

However, the girl was starting to get up despite her broken neck, and upon closer inspection it was no human girl, but a masterfully crafted doll.

In fact, Yogiri and Tomochika were suddenly surrounded by such toys: stuffed animals, figurines, bisque dolls and more, all in different sizes.

Soon the corridor was blocked by such toys both in the front and in the back, even the walls and ceiling had some clinging to them.

"Well, that's one thing explained. I was actually wondering why you were being so obedient."

After judging that she couldn't win on her own she decided to wait for her allies, never actually abandoning her order.

"Although I did believe I would be able to settle this myself."

Lisa replied with a haughty smile and died. Yogiri used his power since there wasn't much merit in keeping her alive now the enemy count increased.

[A puppet master, eh?]

They didn't look very strong individually, but it seemed their plan was to overrun Yogiri and Tomochika with numbers.



A small girl in a black, frilled dress was sitting on one of the emergency stairs' landings. As if to demonstrate her hobby, all around her stuffed animals and dolls were lined up.

Chelsea, personal guard of Yuuki.

Originally she wasn't supposed to take action, both her and Lisa being under the belief that one of them would be more than enough to handle two ungifted on her own. Lisa, the captain of Yuuki's personal guards went out to collect most of the credit while Chelsea stayed on standby just in case, but things had taken a turn far beyond the unexpected: Lisa's magic was rendered useless.

Despite her confusion, Chelsea went into action right away, believing that her dolls would be able to suppress the two candidates.

It didn't matter if her dolls were destroyed. Because her ability to control them was based on possession -- specifically by inserting soul fragments into them -- those fragments just had to be moved to a new doll whenever one of them broke. Even if all the dolls storming the corridor right now were destroyed, all she had to do was send in new ones.

"What theee! How can a woman even be so brutal!"

"She does have better moves than expected."

Chelsea replied to the shouting, life-sized puppet girl next to her. That puppet itself had been the one in control of the doll that just got smashed by Tomochika. The system of possession had several layers, but was administered by the mother soul residing within Chelsea.

They went in with the intention to quickly abduct Tomochika and settle the matter, but it looked like things wouldn't go that smoothly.

"Moru~! First of all kill that Yogiri guy moru~!"

The cute little teddy bear Chelsea was holding in her arms uttered some not so cute words.

"Good idea, even if they're athletic they don't look like they've got the strength to resist."

"Gehehehe, we can go ahead and chop off one or two limbs, right? Just gotta make sure she stays alive!"

Now a boy doll spoke, swinging around a knife with a wicked smile on its face.

"Of course, that won't be a problem. After all, kidnapping her is all we've been ordered."

Chelsea said so despite understanding Yuuki's intentions behind their current mission.

Looking at her own body she could tell very well that while she was certainly adorable, she was lacking in sex appeal. When thinking about possibly being unable to receive Yuuki's affection with this body of hers she couldn't help but be jealous of Tomochika. Erika's conduct was most likely based on jealousy as well, she thought.

"Go."

"Let's get her moru~!"

Stuffed animals, dolls, robots and more flooded Yogiri and Tomochika all at once. However, they all stopped their movements mid air, flying past them with a swish and lamely dropping to the ground.

That much was still within calculations.

"Alright, nex-... huh?"

Feeling a sudden sense of unease, Chelsea took a long look at the teddy bear she was hugging, and what she saw was just that: a teddy bear.

"Morulun!?"

In a panic she shook her toy, but the stuffed animal didn't respond nor move.

"Jennifer! Jacky!"

The girl doll next to her fell to her knees and limply tumbled down the emergency staircase, while the knife wielding boy doll simply fell over and stopped moving.

"No... no! What's wrong!? Morulun, Jennifer, Jacky! Move! Come on, hey!"

Those dolls could have been considered their own selves, irreplaceable to Chelsea. And yet, they all stopped moving one after the other.

Chelsea fell into terror.

Using the dolls that could still move for vision, all she could see was Yogiri walking towards the stairs. The dolls attacked him just like she ordered, then fell to the ground lifelessly the moment they got close to him.

Eventually the door to the emergency stairs opened and Yogiri appeared before Chelsea herself.

The dolls that could still move went into attack mode immediately, intending to defend Chelsea.

"Stop! Please, stop! No more killing! I'm sorry, I'm sorry!"

Chelsea finally made her dolls stop, although it could hardly be called a conscious order to them given the turmoil she was in.

"Takatou-kun... is it just me or do we look like the bad guys here...?"

"Hey, all I did was protect us."

The puppet master and her puppets had gone silent and the only thing that could be heard now were two perplexed voices.

By the time the two arrived at Chelsea the number of unbroken dolls had gone down to a mere handful.

CHAPTER 30

I JUST NEED TO KILL HIM BEFORE HE CAN USE IT

Underground Ruins - First Floor

Yuuki was currently on his way to the exit when he sensed the sudden death of Lisa.

"Master, is something the matter?"

The two personal guards next to Yuuki, Euphemia and Stefanie, immediately noticed that their master had just sensed something.

Ignoring them, Yuuki called up Lisa's action log and saw the mysterious crumbling of her magic, then her death. Shortly after that Chelsea joined the battle only for her dolls to be rendered useless, upon which she lost her will to fight. Still alive, Chelsea told the two classmates all the information she had regarding Yuuki's side.

"Well, not like I ordered her to keep things secret."

The degree of mind control his personal guards were under was exceedingly small, for the simple reason that living dolls that could only say yes wouldn't have been very interesting companions. Furthermore, Yuuki didn't consider it a problem for the Dominator class' mechanics to be leaked. There was no weakness for his enemies to discover, and the more they would find out about his class the deeper they would fall into despair.

However, the current situation was simply unpleasant. So far he had considered the kidnapping of Tomochika a trifling matter, but with the way things were going he now decided to go all out with it.

He ordered all the insects in that hotel's vicinity to search for Yogiri and Tomochika, soon finding them still in the middle of going down the emergency staircase. Yuuki decided to keep watch on them in real time from now on, so that wherever they may go, thousands of eyes would follow them.

"He says he can kill people just by thinking about it, what do you think?"

Yuuki told Euphemia about what happened and asked for her opinion. He didn't feel like remembering all the details of this world's inner workings, so whenever he was curious about something he would ask one of his personal guards.

"It's a rather absurd claim, but I suppose it could be achieved in a handful of ways. One possibility is the interference of an individual that ranks higher in the hierarchy of the Sages' blessing."

The system, called the sages' blessing by this world's natives, was continuously passed on over the generations, beginning at the maintainers of this world. This inheritance essentially was the same as the install that the students had undergone, making people awaken to special powers but in return locking them into a power relation that strictly placed them below the sage their power originated from.

"Is that related to how the sages can restrict my skills?"

"Yes. When receiving the Sages' blessing a kind of restraint is placed upon you, making it impossible to go against them. That restraint is also what makes it possible for them to render skills unusable, or even lower one's resistance to instant death magic to zero. That said, I believe it's highly doubtful that either of these two might rank above Lisa and Chelsea in terms of hierarchy."

"Yeah, even if they were lying about being ungifted, at best they should be in the same position as me. Or wait, is it possible to upgrade your blessing's standing or something?"

"It's certainly possible for a person's blessing to be altered, but even so I can't imagine them somehow ending up with one that puts them above Lisa and Chelsea."

"Alright, so what other explanation is there?"

"An extreme difference in level would make it possible. In that case, making a fight look like the opponent's magic had been rendered useless and killing them so one-sidedly it looks like instant death wouldn't be difficult. However, on top of their regular strength the girls received additional power from you, Lord. I don't see how they could possibly outlevel both Lisa at level 70 and Chelsea at level 56 to such a degree."

"True, without using a leveling method like mine rapidly increasing their levels like that shouldn't be possible."

One's level represents the aggregate amount of energy one's existence holds. That energy is necessary whenever one tries to make use of the system, and absorbed when killing a being that also has the system installed in them. As such, in order to quickly raise one's level it was necessary to kill as strong as possible enemies at an as fast as possible rate.

There was no way for Yogiri and Tomochika to achieve such a feat, so it was impossible for them to outlevel Lisa and Chelsea in the few days they had been in this world. Under normal circumstances gaining a small handful of levels in that time was already the best one could do.

"The third possibility would be the use of an unknown power. I suppose this is the most likely explanation."

"That's hardly an explanation, is it?"

"You are absolutely right, but doesn't it suffice as a reason to give up on Dannoura-sama? There is no need to go head to head with a power we don't understand. In your case, Lord, further contact with them would be easily avoidable."

"Are you telling me to sneak around hiding from someone? No way that's gonna happen."

Although he kept his jesting tone, Yuuki did get a little irritated by that. It just wasn't what a true ruler would do, he believed.

"Well, doesn't matter what kind of amazing offensive power he claims to have, I just need to kill him before he can use it. So, any ideas?"

"Hm, in Lisa's case her reliance on magic is what doomed her, and in Chelsea's case it was her reliance on dolls. After all, as far as physical ability went they weren't that much stronger than a normal person. I believe that sending in someone with a class that excels in melee combat may prove successful, someone at level 50 that can move

at a speed faster than a normal person could perceive."

"That doesn't sound like someone very easily preparable."

At present, nearly all of his military power was busy with hunting. His first priority was the collection of resources, and he still believed that to have been the right course of action. After all, a fight within the city could hardly have been anticipated.

"Guess I'll start by ordering everyone that seems useful to head to the city. Actually, do I really have to bother with something roundabout like melee combat? Can't I just blow him away with some flashy long range magic?"

"Within the area of celestial protection it will be difficult to use any large scale extermination magic, but if we can get them to come outside then that may be possible indeed. We would run the risk of Dannoura-sama getting caught up in it, however."

"Eh, I wouldn't want that to happen. Alright, let's just chase them around for a while then, shouldn't take long until they give up."

Thankfully his supply of slaves was near endless; for each one that died he could just send in two new ones. Even if Yogiri really could kill people just by thinking about it, there had to be some limit to how long he could keep going. The strength of numbers was bound to make him crack eventually.

"This is an order to everyone in the vicinity of Hayabusa. Kill Yogiri Takatou and capture Tomochika Dannoura."

In his whole life, Yuuki Tachibana had never known the feeling of regret, because he had never experienced true failure.

While there were some ups and downs, in the end everything had always turned out the way he wanted.

That was the source of his optimism: His continuous success had him convinced that in the future, too, he would always end up victorious.

His confidence in being unable to lose, based on no concrete evidence whatsoever,

turned into one of the reasons for his success, further cementing his conviction.

That was why he viewed Yogiri's power so optimistically.

He was certain that he was currently at a safe distance from him, and even if his plan failed he could easily recover and attempt a different approach -- with that mindset Yuuki gave the order to kill Yogiri.

One couldn't blame him for his decision. To first get rid of the unknown variable and then carry out the abduction as originally intended was a reasonable strategy.

But that was a fatal error.

He acted on his intent to kill, through which his killing intent formed a concrete connection to Yogiri.

However, Yuuki wasn't given the chance to realize his mistake. In the end he never once had the opportunity to taste the feeling of regret in his life.

Stefanie's reaction was proof of her simple nature, breaking into tears as she witnessed the sudden event before her and requiring several moments to realize what it implied:

An existence that mercilessly went against their understanding of this world had appeared.

At this time, the only one to have come to that realization and tremble in terror was Euphemia.

Thanks for reading. Special thanks to everyone pointing out typos and mistakes.

Regarding the system and its hierarchy

So far we know two ways to acquire the system:

- * Inherit it from your parents
- * Have a sage/sword saint install it in you

Inheriting it from your parents puts you at the same rank as them, meaning your parents can't regulate your skills nor status. It can be assumed that eons in the past, sages started installing the system in people, which was then passed on until the present day and now puts all regular natives at the same level, but below the sages in the hierarchy.

It seems that having a sage bestow it to you puts you at the same rank as regular people, i.e the bottom. As a reminder, the reason the sages bother with Japanese sage candidates in the first place instead of looking for new sages among the native population is their synergy with the system, meaning they tend to awaken to more powerful classes.

Moving up the ladder things get complicated; there's probably an agreement that allows all sages to control all regular people, but among the sages themselves there are most likely all sorts of higher and lower ranking leaders and followers.

The sword saints' blessing is also based on the system, but has its own hierarchy; whether the two hierarchies eventually fuse at the top is currently unknown.

Mind you, this is merely our interpretation of it. If contradicting information pops up this will be edited. Sword saints are elaborated on in a future arc.

CHAPTER 31

LIFE'S HARSH

"Aaaaaah!"

[Weird thing to bring up, but can't you make your scream sound a little cuter?]

Yogiri and Tomochika had finished their interrogation of Chelsea and were currently descending past the hotel's second floor, when Tomochika suddenly screamed for her life.

"Oh, a cockroa—"

"Don't say it! If I hear that word now I won't be able to think of anything else so stop!"

Yogiri's observation was frantically interrupted by Tomochika.

Indeed, there was a cockroach sticking to the wall next to them, and a massive number of other insects had gathered around it. The way they were all clinging to the wall without making even the slightest movements made it seem as though they were waiting for something.

"Tachibana mentioned being able to dominate even insects and small animals, so I guess he's using them to keep us under surveillance?"

Yogiri spoke as he looked at the insects on the wall. He couldn't exactly tell which way their eyes were pointing, but somehow he knew that he was being stared at.

"Can't you do something about these!?"

"I could exterminate them all, if that's what you mea—"

"Do that! Now is the time to use your power for good!"

Tomochika's tone went a notch higher, from hectic to hysteric.

"I can kill them no problem, but I'm pretty sure that'll make them drop from the wall and spill all over the stairs."

Killing something meant there would be a corpse left behind, which had a good chance of turning into an obstacle. Yogiri didn't particularly mind stepping over them, but he could imagine that Tomochika would feel different about it.

"That sounds even worse than the current situation, no thanks!"

"Are you sure? They might come flying at us any moment. Wouldn't be surprised if they could kill a human."

"Nonono, they might be super disgusting but surely they can't kill someone!?"

"With this many of them I could see it happening. You know, like by crawling into your mouth and blocking your windpipe, or getting deeper inside you and chewing away at your internal organs."

"...Yuuki Tachibana... You've really done it now!"

Tomochika's tension rose rapidly as she desperately tried to stop herself from imagining those scenarios.

"But it looks like right now we're only being watched, so let's just leave as planned."

"What if they do fly at us?"

"I'll kill them, although that won't stop their flying husks midair."

"If that happens I'll probably lose my mind, sorry in advance."

The two classmates continued their descent down the stairs and, as expected, the bugs followed them in a steady rhythm, confirming Yogiri's suspicion of being spied on.

They still didn't appear to be planning an attack.

"I think I'll kill Yuuki Tachibana."

Yogiri talked as if he just thought of it on a whim, but such was the conclusion he reached after considering everything he had found out about Yuuki so far.

"Mhm, sure. Don't let me stop you."

Unexpectedly, Tomochika didn't disagree -- apparently bug warfare was where she drew the line. Yogiri went on to explain his reasoning anyway.

"That Dominator class is really troublesome, at this rate the whole world might turn into our enemies."

After questioning the doll user they had a good idea of how the Dominator class worked: Yuuki's slave count was going to continue increasing exponentially, all the while allowing him to control every single one of them. On top of that he was able to absorb some of the energy his slaves gained from hunting, and able to borrow their skills whenever he felt like it.

It wasn't just an issue for Yogiri and Tomochika, Yuuki was a dreadful existence for this entire world. Due to his class it was very well possible that the majority of this world's residents would be turned into his followers at some point.

Yogiri hadn't intended to go out of his way to protect this world's peoples, but if he was going to kill Yuuki anyway then the sooner the better, because the longer he waited the stronger Yuuki's death would affect this world.

"Tachibana-kun is waiting outside town for us, right? Should we just meet him there?"

"If things go the way I'm thinking then that won't be necessary."

When they arrived at the stair landing between the first and second floor the situation suddenly changed; the insects started bustling.

"Please tell me you're sharing this awful premonition!"

Killing intent. Yogiri could clearly see it rising out from among the bugs, a countless number of thin black lines extending towards him. It felt as if they were all connected to one greater mind, telling them to wait for the synchronized signal.

"Kind of feels like being preyed on by a hunter about to lunge at you."

"Right!? I don't even care anymore, please just kill them already! I'm pretty sure I'll die just by being swarmed by them!"

"Yeah, I don't like the idea of getting swarmed either."

Yogiri no longer had any reason to hesitate in using his power.

The current situation wasn't actually that critical, but if they were going to keep getting targeted in the future then they would have to constantly pay attention to their surroundings. It wouldn't be an impossible task thanks to Yogiri's ability to sense killing intent, but it would certainly be terribly troublesome.

Additionally, the further Yuuki's power extended the more their sphere of action would shrink. Before long they wouldn't be able to freely search this world for a way to return home anymore, and even just meeting up with their classmates could have become become impossible for them.

"Die."

And so he used his power.

However, the insects barely twitched.

"Don't tell me it misfired after all this time!?"

Even her savior Yogiri couldn't save her now -- Tomochika's thoughts could be read from her desperate voice.

"I can't guarantee that misfires aren't possible, but up until now it's never happened, okay?"

"So why aren't they dropping!?"

"Well, if everything went right then Tachibana just died."

"Wait, what?"

Tomochika didn't expect Yogiri to suddenly bring up Yuuki, who wasn't even here, and lost her train of thought for a moment.

What Yogiri did was focus his power on the source of all the killing intent towards him, however: Yogiri's power didn't allow him to kill anyone anywhere just because they harbored killing intent towards him. Likewise, if one were to attempt to kill Yogiri by sending in some underlings then Yogiri wouldn't be able to kill the ring leader, only the actual attacker.

The Dominator was an exception to that rule.

In essence, the Dominator class was the power of raising a colony. Yuuki was the head of that colony, and the slaves were his arms and legs. That was why it was possible for him to acquire new slaves through his old ones: they were part of him. That connection between him and his slaves was also the reason his killing intent ended up directly connecting to Yogiri, a connection that could be traced back to its origin.

"Tachibana tried killing me with the bugs, so I killed him first, basically."

"Are you telling me that power works even if you have no clue where your target actually is!?"

"I mean, if he can reach me then it's only logical that I could reach him as well. Life's harsh, whenever you try to harm someone you risk being harmed yourself."

"Isn't life exceptionally soft on you alone though!?"

"I don't know about that, life wasn't particularly easy back in Japan."

"Ahh, more importantly than that, these guys are starting to move again!"

As the two were talking the bugs right next to them started scrambling about

chaotically. Yogiri couldn't sense any more killing intent from them and judged that it was just the bustling of regular bugs.

"Looks like they're free from the mind control now that Tachibana has died."

Yogiri was relieved seeing that. He considered the possibility of the insects carrying out the last order they had received before being liberated, but it looked like the Dominator's death voided all active orders.

"But that's terrible!"

Tomochika responded with a shrill scream as she watched the clump of bugs unfold, scattering in all directions and starting to fly all over the place. Sadly, their liberation from mind control didn't make them any more pleasant to look at.

"Yeah, let's get away from here."

"Aren't you going to kill them!?"

"Killing things just for being gross sounds a little unacceptable if you ask me."

"Why are you always so reasonable in these situations!?"

Doing the emergency staircase justice the two candidates hurried down the steps and, at long last, arrived at the hotel's exit.



When they stepped through the hotel's emergency door they found themselves in one of the side alleys next to the hotel. The high buildings' shadows made everything seem fairly gloomy, but it was still several hours until sunset.

Tomochika quickly shut the door behind them, escaping from the bugs for good. Then again, it wasn't like the bugs were going to attack humans at random. In reality there probably wasn't much reason to rush outside like that.

"Now that I think about it, do we still have a reason to run away from here?"

Tomochika raised her voice after finally recovering from the bug scare.

"You mean because Tachibana's died? I don't know, some of his followers might attack us for revenge."

Perhaps there were people among Yuuki's slaves that would have become his followers even without his Dominator class. With that in mind Yogiri decided that continuing their escape was for the best, even if it was only switching hotels.

"Alright, so running away it is?"

"I'd say so, yeah. Actually we might as well start heading for the capital already."

That route sounded the most likely to spare them any future trouble with fanatic Yuuki followers, so that's the one they both chose, and after deciding to start their journey to the capital right away Yogiri and Tomochika went out on Hayabusa's main street, where they ran into the gruesome after-effects of the earlier armored vehicles' rampage.

Several carriages had been flipped over and some of them appeared to still have passengers inside, locked in by the wreckage or unable to crawl out on their own. Rescue operations were already in process.

"I wonder what that was about. I don't know if you saw it, but earlier some massive trucks sent a bunch of pedestrians and carriages flying when they drove through here."

[Mhm, we shouldn't get too involved. Better get away from here quickly.]

They were just about to hurry up their pace when suddenly a loud voice could be heard.

[Ah, everyone hear me? All of you townfolk I mean. Masayuki here, acolyte of sage Lain and captain of the Anti-Death Battalion. Kinda sudden, but I'm on a manhunt right now and could really use your cooperation.]

The voice seemed to come from a radio broadcast, judging by its occasional cracks.

[More specifically, I'm looking for a guy called Yogiri Takatou and a girl called Tomochika Dannoura. Uhh, apparently they're both roughly 17 year old Japanese brats, black hair, black eyes. Bring 'em out to the main square for me, dead or alive, whatever. And I know what you're thinking, 'you seriously expect us to care?'. Yeah well for your information I just sent out a couple Anti-Death units who were ordered to assault random people in set time intervals, so if you don't want to get mauled to death you better get me those kids quick.]

"Where did that manic come from suddenly!?"

"He does sound a little weird in the head."

Tomochika's reaction to the broadcast was certainly understandable.

[Now you might think that just fleeing from the town is going to be enough for you to survive, but I allowed myself to lock you all up in this city. Fiddled with the sages' barrier a little and now it's impossible to pass through it. Also, while I was at it I made it so that anyone that dies within the barrier gets turned into an undead. Must be your lucky day because the Anti-Death Battalion is currently recruiting, aye! Young and old, male and female, anyone's welcome y'all!]

"And he even has a plan, continuing to make new undead until the whole town is swarming with them and we have nowhere to go! Wait, maybe he's just crazy?"

Tomochika voiced her thoughts. Indeed, if Masayuki was positive that her and Yogiri were in Hayabusa then it would have been a solid plan, but if he was conducting such a manhunt without definite evidence of their presence then it could only be called madness.

[So yeah, good luck with that.]

And with one last crack the broadcast cut off.

“...And now?”

Overwhelmed by the sudden turn of events Tomochika looked to Yogiri, who didn't have much to say either.

"Time to run?"

Either way, the town square was now a danger zone.

They decided to slip back into a side-alley, but before they could do so one of the demolished horse carriages suddenly flew through the air. Dazed by the sudden flying cart they watched on until it eventually landed with a loud crash, breaking down even further.

Looking back at the spot where the carriage began its flight there now stood a strange man in its place.

With his head bashed in he seemed like a dead man no matter how one looked at it, but despite that he was standing upright on his own two feet -- albeit in a rather unnatural manner. He was most likely the one that sent the carriage flying, and as if to follow his example the whole main street was suddenly swirling with flying vehicles, the same thing happening all over the town.

"I'd just like to point out that we somehow stumbled from a fantasy adventure into a zombie apocalypse!"

The people that were supposed to be in need of rescue had suddenly started attacking the people that were supposed to rescue them.

CHAPTER 32

AND THAT'S IT FOR ZOMBIE TIME!

The feudal lord of Hayabusa, Ryouta, was one of the many adherents of the rulers of this world, the sages.

However, that didn't mean he was a fan of them.

He had a simple reason for harboring an aversion against them, a reason that was difficult to ignore for someone like him, who considered themselves an upstanding human being: Pretty much everyone that had to do with them was a jerk.

Although, no matter how he thought of them and their methods, the fact that they were the ones repelling the otherworldly calamities was true.

Right now, one such jerk was before him, leisurely sipping his tea. Masayuki, acolyte of Lain and captain of the Anti-Death Battalion, sat on the opposite end of the short-leg table, his legs stretched out wide in a fashion that couldn't be much more arrogant.

"Just how many tragedies did you cause on your way here!?"

Ryouta smashed his fist down on the table.

The room they were currently in was part of the building Ryouta made use of for his political duties as feudal lord; the same room he was just panicking in due to the report of a terrible tragedy occurring in his town, when suddenly the man responsible for that very tragedy leisurely walked in.

"Just doing some local resupplying, a'ight? Zombies gotta be replaced pretty frequently, y'see."

"Don't screw with me!"

The whole town had fallen into chaos because of the massacre that Masayuki and his small army had started.

Acolytes were certainly allowed to use force when meeting an obstacle that stopped them from accomplishing their tasks, but based on what had been reported to Ryouta

the armored vehicles actually went out of their ways to hit as many pedestrians as they could -- their conduct was clearly motivated by pure malice.

"What in the hell did you even come here for!? I'm the one Lain tasked with governing this city, there's no reason for you to get involved, none whatsoever!"

"Why so cold, man? Didn't we survive the same battlefield, brothers in arms and all?"

"Survive, really? Didn't you die a long time ago!? Find a coffin to rot in already, damn it!"

Although one had to admit, their fates did seem entwined. Back in their days as sage candidates they both fought under Lain as their leader, and now as acolytes they were in that same boat once more.

"I'm searching for some people, just cooperate."

Not in the mood to bicker it out, Masayuki moved on to the main topic.

"I refuse!"

"Nah, this is an order from Lain, no refusing here."

Ryouta was at a loss for words. If Masayuki was telling the truth then there really was no choice but to obey.

"The people I'm after are two Japanese, both sage candidates."

"If they're candidates then just go contact the sage responsible for them!"

"No can do, they're defective goods. The system didn't install in them so we can't use Trace."

"So what? You think I know every Japanese that goes in and out of my city?"

"Hey, I know this town isn't controlling all the entering and leaving, I'm not expecting you to have any idea where they are."

"Then what was that about cooperating?"

"Basically we'll have your citizens do the cooperating, by hunting the Japanese. If they're in this town then it shouldn't be long till they're caught."

"...Wait. What's with that phrasing? Do you not know whether they're in Hayabusa right now?"

Ryouta felt a chill run down his spine. Surely, he thought, surely not even Masayuki would declare something as ridiculous as a hunt for Japanese without any evidence of their presence.

"Ah well, there was this train accident not too far from here, right? It's pretty much guaranteed they were on that train, and not like they have anywhere else to go from there but the nearest town."

"And that's all the reasoning you have for wreaking havoc in my city!?"

"Hey now, this was Lain's order, alright? 'Find Yogiri Takatou and Tomochika Dannoura and deal with them,' just like that. As long as it's for the sake of my mission anything's allowed, ain't that the truth?"

"Do you actually think a bunch of civilians will be able to help you with that mission?"

"No worries there, the Anti-Death Battalion has already been dispatched. Just gotta give the signals and they'll start attacking people."

"...What?"

Ryouta froze up. Until now Masayuki had been talking about searching for two Japanese, but all of a sudden he was talking about attacking his citizens; Ryouta hoped he misheard.

"Come on man, who'd actually join the effort if we just asked 'Hey there, please help us out'? You gotta make them taste the despair of death before they really try, like by threatening total annihilation if they don't find them in time."

"Are you kidding me? Who'd worry about your dumb manhunt in such a situation!?"

"If they don't then they die, simple stuff. They just gotta do some searching on the side while fleeing from the undead. Then again, if everyone died then that'd be the end of the manhunt as well, aye?"

His playful tone couldn't be overheard, making it known that the whole talk about acting for the sake of his mission was mere pretense, that in truth he only wanted to let his battalion run wild.

Even so, Ryouta could only gnash his teeth. As long as Masayuki continued to insist that he was acting in the name of Lain Ryouta could only abide.

"Come on, hand over the key already."

"...What's Sage Lain doing right now?"

Hayabusa's barrier was raised by Lain, and the duty of controlling it was given to Ryouta. The key was indispensable in that regard, it allowed one to release the barrier, strengthen it, and even restricting the sages' blessings was possible. It certainly wasn't something one handed over just like that.

"Lain's cleaning up after Santarou right now. Wouldn't be surprised if she showed up here before long actually, Santarou's territory wasn't too far from here after all. Don't look at me like you can't hand it over without Lain's permission, I've already told you I'm here under her orders."

Masayuki wouldn't dare use Lain's name to bluff, and knowing that, Ryouta pulled out his key and reluctantly shoved it over the table towards him.

"Damn it! Do you have any idea how hard I worked to get this town to where it is now!?"

Once Masayuki's battalion started moving there was no way this matter would be settled with just a manhunt; an image of Hayabusa in ashes was already coming afloat in Ryouta's mind. All he could do now was pray that the people Masayuki was looking for would be found quickly.

Masayuki practically snatched the key from the table and stood up.

"No need for that grim look, weren't disasters also part of those SimCity games you played? Pretty sure a zombie outbreak was one of 'em! And hey, doesn't the real fun part only start once you gotta rebuild your whole town? Then again, can't use those domestic affairs cheats in a survival horror game, eh?"

The Anti-Death Battalion captain tapped Ryouta's shoulder as he leisurely walked past him.

"Never played the 2013 edition, what the hell do I know? Just... god damn it."

'Maybe it's time to give up on the ten million megacity dream,' Ryouta thought as he dropped his head in gloom.



A deformed figure slowly limped through a back alley.

It might have been possible to pass by him unharmed, but Yogiri decided to get rid of him anyway, just in case.

He released his power, upon which the figure stopped moving immediately. With a dull sound it collapsed to the ground, returning to its original state of a lifeless corpse.

"Of course, why wouldn't you be able to kill a zombie, haha."

It looked like Tomochika had gotten used to Yogiri's power by now.

[Oi, aren't you a little too relaxed? Pay some more heed to your surroundings]

And unhappy with her carefree attitude, Mekomoko called for some more caution.

"Not my fault there's nothing for me to do with Takatou-kun settling everything on his own. I mean, even a zombie apocalypse doesn't seem so bad now."

"Well, with how slow these guys are it's not like they're much of a threat."

"Sure, but just defeating them from afar is a pretty big deal already if you ask me. Don't know about you, but I wouldn't want to get too close to these."

The body that just fell to the ground was already in the process of decomposition, and in a shape that made it difficult to believe it had been able to move around just a few moments ago.

"Not sure where to go from here, honestly. Getting out of this town and heading straight to the capital sounds good, but that'd be quite the distance to travel on foot."

Yogiri spoke as they walked through another back alley, using its shadow for stealth. Fortunately the town's search hadn't made any progress so far, the citizens were too busy dealing with the sudden zombie outbreak. However, even if they didn't have to worry about being captured any time soon, there wasn't anywhere for them to go after escaping Hayabusa.

"Hmm, guess there's not point in going to the train station either, under these circumstances."

Tomochika voided her thoughts. Earlier they intended to get away from Yuuki's slaves by taking the train to the capital, but now the situation had changed completely.

"Yeah, I doubt the trains are being operated right now. Also, there's a good chance we'd really get captured if we went to a public place like that."

"Actually, why are we being treated like wanted criminals anyway?"

"Well, we did kill a sage. They probably won't leave us alone for a while."

Nonetheless, Yogiri still viewed that one time as justified self-defense and held no regrets. But whether he regretted it or not, it increased the chances of getting caught up in some annoying mess quite drastically.

Just as Yogiri was thinking about what they should do next, a new announcement was made.

[And that's it for Zombie Time! Still alive, y'all? Sure the zombies have some power, but with the whole rotting and falling apart they've got going on they're way too slow to be any real threat, aren't they? No way you died to those, right? Well you better didn't because you'll be doing a manhunt now, it's now time to hunt the Japanese! The zombies are gonna stop attacking people from now on so go hunt me some Japanese. Oh right, I should mention that you won't have to worry about their usual cheat-like blessings, we restrained those. Ain't this a great chance to finally give those smug jerks the beating they deserve? H-o-w-e-v-e-r, in another hour we'll be moving on to Skeleton Time! These guys are a hell of a lot faster than zombies, and don't get me started on their strength! Do consider this hour your final chance of surviving this day. A'ight, good luck y'all.]

Much like the last time, the torrent of insanity ended with a crack.

"Umm..."

[Mhm, we might have to take this situation more seriously now.]

"Sounds like we'll get targeted for real from here on out."

Yogiri and Tomochika had certainly seen several people that were clearly Japanese in this city, but they were far from common and restricting that number to only those that were around 17 years old narrowed it down quite a bit.

Unlike earlier, now they really had to be cautious of their surroundings, but before Yogiri could even relay that thought to Tomochika it was already too late.

"I've found some! We've got two Japanese here!"

A whole gang of armed men appeared in droves from around the alley's corner.

All of them were covered in blood, but based on their looks they probably couldn't tell

whether it was their own or that of someone else themselves: Their eyes were bloodshot and the air around them teemed with violence.

Yogiri had been trying to avoid a scenario like this, but it appeared his efforts ended in vain; with how strong the men's killing intent was it didn't take Yogiri's power to tell what they were planning.

"Die."

Yogiri used his power and the barricade of people before them crumbled at once. However, it seemed like their presence was already picked up on by more people, based on the new people he could sense making their way to them.

"Did they think I wouldn't kill civilians? Getting kind of fed up to be honest."

Even if there was some manipulation happening, all of them made the conscious choice to attack him and Tomochika, and Yogiri didn't feel any remorse killing a would-be attacker. As far as innocent bystanders went he did try his best not to kill them.

And like that, Yogiri was starting to feel some irritation towards the person responsible for this whole mess.

CHAPTER 33

MIGHT BE TIME FOR SOME EXPERIMENTS

Yuuki collapsed.

Stefanie, who specialized in regeneration magic, tried healing him, but he didn't show any reaction.

Despite having been in perfect shape just moments ago he fell to the ground without any warning whatsoever -- there was no one around them that could have harmed him, no one had done anything at all.

And yet he had definitely died.

Unable to deny that truth, Stefanie clung to his body and broke into tears with a heartrending cry.

For her, being taken in by Yuuki could have been called a stroke of luck, considering her life as slave until that point. She was always saying empty-sounding flattery like 'As expected of master!', but in her case those words may very well have come from her heart. If nothing else, her grief over Yuuki's death was genuine.

Euphemia on the other hand was still shaking from fear, but finally started to regain her composure. She had been terrified of suddenly dying just like her late master, but it appeared Yogiri didn't intend to kill Yuuki's slaves along with him.

Mustering all the calmness she could, Euphemia focused her consciousness on her own state of mind and realized: there was no feeling of being controlled. Even when she looked at Yuuki's corpse, the only thought that came to mind was 'Serves you right.'

There was also a strange feeling of a great amount of energy flowing into her, increasing the weight of her soul -- with Yuuki having died, his soul dispersed and was absorbed by the two girls next to him. Most of it dissolved into the atmosphere, but even just a fragment of his soul was gigantic and certainly a blessing of unfathomable magnitude.

—Now then, where should I go from here?

Unhappy with his punishment being no more than death, Euphemia glared at Yuuki's

body. A good part of her wanted to rip off his limbs and tear out his intestines that very moment, destroying his body until it bore no resemblance to his original appearance.

That was the kind of tribe Euphemia was born in, a clan with no respect for the dead. Raiding their dead enemies' graves and exposing their corpses to the world was how they silenced their grudges.

"Go ahead, you can have that."

However, surely Stefanie wouldn't sit idly by if she went ahead and ruined the corpse to her heart's content. In the end they were both victims and Euphemia had no reason to dislike her, nor one to fight her.

"...What?"

Stefanie looked up at Euphemia in a daze. It seemed she, on the other hand, had been expecting Euphemia to grieve over Yuuki's death just like her.

"You've probably noticed, but we were released from domination; I don't have any more reason to be loyal to this guy. Don't know about you, but I'm leaving."

"I..."

Stefanie was clearly overwhelmed by the situation, but while Euphemia didn't have any reason to dislike her neither did she see any reason for why she should watch over her.

"Well, bye."

She promptly decided to leave the confused Stefanie behind and made her way to the exit. There most likely wasn't much harm in leaving her behind; she was more than strong enough to handle these ruins' first floor on her own.

And on her way to the ruins' exit, Euphemia thought about what to do next.

The first objective was going to be grouping back up with her tribe and reviving her village. As long as her old companions were alive she could trust them to make their

way back to their village as well. Thanks to her tribes' naturally well developed physical abilities Yuuki most likely didn't view her clansmen as his usual dispensable pawns, so there was a good chance they were still alive. Looking at it that way, Euphemia realized that there was no need to be pessimistic; she and her tribe could still start anew.

The more she thought about all the things that had to be done the stronger grew her desire to get out of these ruins, but before her feet broke into a full sprint on their own she noticed something strange.

Her throat was terribly dry.

And not just that, Euphemia soon realized that her entire surroundings had dried up. Compared to when she entered the ruins, when they were as damp as one would expect from an underground structure in a primal forest, the current level of humidity could only be called abnormally low. Looking at the ground before her she could even see that small piles of sand had formed.

When she finally arrived at the staircase to the surface and saw the daylight shine in she was convinced that something was off: There should have been no way for the sunlight to illuminate the first floor through the two story high building that the stairs were situated in.

A blast of dry air blew through the corridor.

There was no doubt that something had happened on the surface, but she still had to get out of the ruins and return home.

Bundling her determination, Euphemia ascended the staircase and having arrived at the top the scene she witnessed was as she feared: There was nothing at all. The whole area had been turned into a desert, leaving behind no signs of the ruins nor the gloomy primal forest.

"What in the world?"

It was too much for her to wrap her head around.

Hoping to find an answer to her many questions she looked around her and it didn't take long for her to find a huge spot of darkness in the distance.

Whatever it was, it was black and had no clear shape, only appearing like a bundle of fog that just barely maintained the shape of a human. With massive strides it moved towards Hayabusa, giving a dreadfully ominous impression to anyone that spotted it. Taking another look around her, Euphemia saw that the sudden desertification had passed through the ancient forest in one straight line. It seemed that giant walking

shadow was somehow responsible for the abnormality around her.

Aggressors.

Beings of which no one knew when, where or why they appeared in this world. One would expect any and everyone of this world to fear these creatures, but Euphemia actually felt relieved, for the aggressor paid her no attention.

It appeared her stay below the surface had saved her, and since the walking anomaly was heading straight towards the city all she had to do from here was flee the other way.

"Now where did you come from? Sure looks like I found myself a Kurayami survivor."

Addressed by an unknown voice Euphemia hastily turned back around and found herself face to face with a woman in a scarlet red dress. And she realized: She was far from having escaped danger.

For Euphemia, a single look was enough. Enough to sense that the person before her was the natural enemy of the weak, a being that preyed on her kind, a violator of souls.

"Mhm, doesn't look like you've got a whole lot of strength going for you. But see, I really don't know what to do about that thing. Let's see whether you can tell me something I don't know."

Fighting was out of the question. Whatever it took, Euphemia absolutely had to get away from that place.

However, the moment she looked into the woman's eyes she lost the ability to move her body.

She was hit by Charm, a skill that temporarily controlled her soul and made it impossible for her to raise resistance.

The woman in the red dress slowly walked up to her, in response to which Euphemia obediently exposed her neck, soon feeling the soft sensation of a pair of lips on her.

Thus, Euphemia learned that the one before her was Lain, sage and Original Blood.



It was a terrible match up.

That much Lain could tell right away when she first encountered Kurayami. It was just too ambiguous of an existence, she couldn't even tell where it began and where it ended. She had no idea what kind of creature it was, and actually wasn't certain whether it even had the necessary consciousness to be considered a creature.

Hitting it seemed to achieve about as much as striking at fog, and to make things more complicated the part that came into contact with it withered instantly. First it would dry up, then crumble, then turn into sand. Fortunately, Lain's immortal body was hardly fazed by such an attack, but while her defensive properties may have been enough to let her stand up against Kurayami there was nothing she could do as far as offense went.

She was a vampire, a being that steadily gathered new followers to command. She had impeccable regenerative abilities, she could charm people with a single glance and her transformation ability allowed her to take flight, and those weren't even all of her powers. There was not a single decisive weakness an opponent could abuse, and yet she utterly lacked the means to defeat Kurayami.

In retrospect, Santarou and his ability to command all archetypes of magic should have had a fairly decent chance against it. After all, he did possess the offensive ability required to have driven it away once. Lain held huge magical power within her as well, but her spells weren't anything too special, mostly consisting of regeneration magic and the sages' barrier magic. Other than that her repertoire was rather basic offensive magic only.

In the end, Lain couldn't stop Kurayami from advancing now matter how hard she tried. In fact, it was possible Kurayami hadn't even taken notice of her.

And in such a hopeless situation, Lain found a blonde girl left behind in Kurayami's wake, just vacantly gazing after it.

Under normal circumstances Lain wouldn't bother taking a second look at her, but her unharmed condition in such a place did raise her curiosity.

Lain decided to make the girl her follower.

A Charm would have been enough to make her speak, but a charmed mind's thought process was too fuzzy for a proper interrogation. Just turning her into a follower made things easier.

However, the only thing the girl, Euphemia, could tell her was that she was underground while Kurayami passed by. That was rather disappointing, but after

questioning her further she found out that she was involved with one of Sion's sage candidates, and that she had even come into contact with Yogiri Takatou.

"So he can kill people even if they aren't near him, that's quite something."

Now that Euphemia was her follower it was impossible for her to lie to Lain, so if nothing else that was her honest interpretation of what happened.

And assuming it was true, that meant Yogiri could kill people even over long distance.

"Looks like it's roughly 10 kilometers to the city from here."

"It is indeed."

"Hmm, so at the very least he can reach this far."

Lain squeezed any relevant information Euphemia had out of her.

Going by what Yogiri said, just thinking about it was enough for him to kill somebody. On top of that, his power wasn't just limited to humans but could even be applied to objects spawned from magic and things like soul infused dolls.

Most of his targets seemed to have been within his field of vision, but apparently he was also able to kill people that were stealthed as well as far away underground. There was a good chance he had some kind of detection ability.

Of course his instant death power was already dangerous, but Lain believed that his detection was what would turn out to be the real problem. It probably wasn't a coincidence that Yuuki died right as he ordered his slaves to kill Yogiri. He must have somehow sensed Yuuki's order.

In essence, Yogiri's power was going to be harder to deal with than mere instant death magic.

"Might be time for some experiments, I'd love to see what he's capable of."

Lain was starting to think that the Anti-Death Battalion might actually prove unable to handle him, which would mean that blindly sending more killers after him would just be a waste of time and resources. However, even if they were just going to get killed off, she absolutely had to use that opportunity to see Yogiri's power in action

with her own eyes.

Its sphere of action, its scale of threat, the properties of it.

His personality. What he liked, what he disliked, what he disregarded.

"And most importantly, whether he could kill even me."

"Apologies, I did not understand that."

Demonstrating her excellent hearing, Euphemia immediately responded to Lain's mumbling. It may have been just the two of them there, but Lain still reprimanded herself for her carelessness.

"Never mind that. This whole Yogiri investigation may just be for naught anyway."

The Aggressor Kurayami was on its way to Hayabusa, Yogiri's current location.

If it was just going to keep advancing like it had been this far then there were most likely not going to be any survivors. There wouldn't be a problem if the sages' celestial protection was able to fend it off, but in the end the barrier was no more than a monster repellent. Whether it was going to be enough to stop Kurayami's power was questionable at best.

"Masayuki's face will be a sight to behold, if nothing else."

She had seen enough to know that continuing to chase after Kurayami wasn't going to change anything.

Unpleasant it may be, Lain was starting to consider asking other sages for support.

CHAPTER 34

LET'S FACE THE 'TASTE OF JUSTICE' FOR A WHILE!

At first, it was Yogiri who thought we should leave the city in secrecy, but it was impossible, as we were found.

Once found, people flooded there and made a fuss.

However, there was no attitude to hold back at Yogiri, even if he looked like a normal person.

"You'll die if you approach."

Yogiri briefly conveyed his request, and did accordingly, following his spoken request. From the back alley to the main street.

Killing all the people who tried to knock him down while walking in a dignified manner.

Naturally the fuss became bigger, and more people gathered and surrounded Yogiri.

"What are you doing! Go! I'll do it!"

"Idiot! When you get close..."

Those who do not understand the circumstances well, they lose blood and try to come in.

As soon as they cross the boundary of death, those stupid ones have collapsed.

"It's the first time I see someone carrying out his words to that disgusting degree!"

Said reflexively Tomochika, seeing those reckless suicide attacks.

"They're the weird ones for thinking they won't be killed even though they're trying to kill us."

“No no no, it’s because usually you don’t think you’ll die just by getting closer to someone!”

I think that Yogiri had no obligation to explain again and again. It is foolish to carelessly come closer by seeing the situation.

[But the lord didn’t move even though he saw death.]

“It’s because of the seal release!”

[Please don’t say it is bad. This place is not peaceful Japan. It is troubling when you are in an emergency, keeping a man close to death.]

From Yogiri’s view, Tomochika seemed to not have changed to anything else in the different world from the beginning until now. I wonder if we can afford to put in a Tsukkomi.

“But, are these people following me?”

Those who had came were not moving apart, and moved accordingly to the movement of Yogiri.

A crowd has been formed from the left and right at the back.

It was a semicircle about 10 meters in diameter.

“You can not leave it after finding it.”

I wonder if they were scared of the fist that I had raised, or if they were scared of something else.

I don’t know what kind of psychology this is, I can neither approach nor leave, they followed me as I wondered around.

However, it seemed to be regaining composure, whether they began to consciously realize the stupidity of walking apart or not.

“Well, where is the place you’ll take us when you catch us?”

“Oh, Ah. If you go straight here, there is a central square. But, what are you going to do?”

To the right, a little far away, an elderly man walking side by side answered.

“I heard that, so I’m planning to go.”

“Well... it would have been nice if you did so from the beginning! Then they wouldn’t have died so much!”

“Why have you taken care of those who suddenly attacked you?”

I was just aimed at somehow in the city where I just happened to drop by the way, Yogiri said.

Even if there was nothing to be aimed at by Yogiri, it was Masayuki that involved this town, is what I wanted to complain about there.

“If so, would you mind getting out of town quickly? You can do anything to the barrier, can’t you?”

Tomochika thought it would be better to escape without going to the plaza if he didn’t care about the people in the city.

[Yes, this spirit has also been suffering.]

“I think I can do it, but about when we leave town. Are you walking to the next one?”

[That’s true. I hear that a steep canyon will continue from here to the kingdom. If it’s not a train, movement will be tough.]

“So somehow, I have to make the train move.”

For that, it is reasonably quick to meet Masayuki who is causing the situation.

That’s what Yogiri was thinking.

“That... I guess it was wrong to try to attack you without thinking, but what do you intend to do?”

Because he had answered first, the elderly man was like a representative.

“I will try to talk a little bit.”

“The opponent is a follower of the sage, who is doing these kinds of things. I think you can’t keep it together.”

Whether I myself wasn’t sure of the standing position, the man said such a thing.

“I hate being too honest, but I’ll eliminate them at that time. If it can’t be talked about, it is just an obstacle.”

While saying such things, Yogiri reached the square.

If it was as usual, this would be a place of recreation where many people gathered.

However, there was no relief, it was a crowd of ugly monsters.

Distorted and decaying humans wandered around, and the white horse corpse is rattling.

Gargoyles fluttered in the sky, the giants made of rocks looked down on the street.

They are probably an immortal group.

When I was walking towards the center of the plaza, there weren’t any henchmen surrounding us.

Entering the square, I ceased walking at the entrance.

“Hahahahah. As far as I was looking, it seems to be the most different world fantasy? But it’s not fun.”

Tomochika was strengthening, but her voice felt frightened. To the other side, armored cars that Tomichika saw are lined up. As I saw it, it was unlikely all the monsters could be accommodated in this place, it seems that moving corps had been raised in this town.

“How about taking that car away?”

It is a sturdy car. Even the fuel can somehow manage to reach the kingdom with it.

“Can you drive Takoto-kun?”

“I have done it with Marika.”

“Wow, I do not want such people to drive me...”

There were only Japanese in front of the car. However, the majority were dead. I guessed that the Japanese who had gathered, regardless of age and gender, had been killed here. They were stacked casually.

Only 2 Japanese people were alive. One was a man wearing a suit, standing next to a mountain of corpses. He stood with a stupid appearance. The other was on the pile of corpses. Sitting on a corpse, legs opening as if to scratch the plaza, it's a big guy wearing a black cloak on his skin. I understood at a glance that it was Masayuki. Unlike the undead, intention is felt in his eyes. Of course, it's probably bad as he is a person who tramples corpses.

“Oh? Did you guys mean to come out? Hey guys, hey! Will you be a sacrifice for everyone in the city?”

Masayuki skewed his face blatantly. Although he seems pleased that the targeted people have come, he apparently doesn't welcome them much.

“Is there such a thing?”

“No no, do not deny instantly! Let's face the taste of justice for a while!”

Tomochika is saying that in a panic, but Yogiri has no intention of going for the city.

“Are you willing to talk?”

“I don’t talk. Well. I don’t agree to this if I don’t explain exactly what I want to do. This is how you keep promises. The game is over once I’ve killed you.”

Masayuki’s tone of voice, rather than a promise, is a matter of room for expanded interpretation. Perhaps the upper sages have said to do anything to kill Yogiri. Then, if that’s the case, it would be impossible to do more than that if you killed him.

“We want to go to the kingdom by train. Please solve the barrier and let us use the station.”

“...What?”

Masayuki is frozen with a stupid face. I guess he couldn’t understand what Yogiri was saying. From there, it took some time for him to move, and Yogiri waited patiently for it.

“Hey Hey Hey, come on! Don’t say that’s all! Can you not think of something more mindful! I wonder if you’re in a position where you can ask for that! If you managed to do that, use your head! Are you stupid? Are you that stupid?!”

“Oh, there is negotiation material available. Then, you’ll be annoying but I’ll let you live. It will be nessecary to unlock the barrier and for post-treatment as well.”

Masayuki has solidified again. Yogiri’s attitude of awkwardness couldn’t put it off to much, only his cheeks were moving.

“I’m not even talking, and I’m just pissing you off! I will die soon! Ahh?!”

Masayuki stands up with excitement. Whether it was a signal, the undead people who were fluffy all turned at once to Yogiri.

“Die.”

However, with a word of Yogiri, the appearance of the open space suddenly changed. The corpses who had been standing collapsed with a flutter. Gargoyles who had been

flying in the sky turned into stone statues and crashed into the ground, and the rock giants collapsed while crushing many undead beneath it.

Here, the *'Immortality Mission'* was annihilated, except for the headmaster.

CHAPTER 35

I DECIDE WHAT 'DEATH' IS

There were only 4 Japanese who remained in the plaza.

Yogiri Takatou was just standing up, while Tomochika Dannoura looks around with a slightly downcast look.

A young man wearing a suit openly expresses his intention to surrender in full by raising his hands, and Masayuki was solidified as he stood on top of the corpses.

"I am the lord who rules this area, Takahashi Ryouta. This case is all this guy's doing and I have nothing to do with it!" (Ryouta)

The suit man, Ryouta, showed his position immediately in less than a moment. It is a flashy and irrational action for a lord.

"What... is this? Wh-What is this!" (Masayuki)

Masayuki shouts such to disguise the embarrassment.

"Don't be silly, hey! Why did the undead die? Why are the already deceased dying again!" (Masayuki)

"That, undead? I do not know at all, even if I am told they are undead. Isn't it alive because it can still move?" (Yogiri)

There was no intention to mock, Yogiri had asked a pure-hearted question.

Even if it's said a dead body moves, if it's moving it will be alive.

He who is dead will not move.

That is common sense for Yogiri.

"I dared to cut into what I was doing somehow! The words of the Moving Corpses are incredibly contradictory!" (Tomochika)

It seems Tomochika daringly didn't care about that point.

"Everyone is dead. What will you do?" (Yogiri)

"Damn itttt! Lain! Well, did you know this!? Instant death magic? I guess this isn't the case!" (Masayuki)

Masayuki makes a curse towards the air.

It seemed to be directed towards Lain and the others, but there are no such people at this place.

"Isn't this the case when you are talking in confusion? I'm asking you what to do. The current situation is as you see. You can understand it with a bit of your head?" (Yogiri)

"Ah, I was told to use my head a while ago, I was concerned." (Masayuki)

Masayuki jumped off the mountain of corpses.

"What's wrong with you! It isn't a sage's protection? Is it a Sword Saint? Or is it a dragon? There must be something! How are you killing the dead men!" (Masayuki)

Masayuki wasn't able to convince himself, he was so confined to the event that the Undead had died.

"I will decide what is death. I will live if I move, and stop when I die. It doesn't matter what you think." (Yogiri)

Disorder, Confusion, Exhaustion.

Masayuki showed mixed faces of various emotions until he finally filled it with excitement.

You can feel killing intent in Masayuki resembling madness, which dominates the area.

If it's a weak person's heart it would be enough to make it impossible to move.

The violent emotion of Masayuki, it immediately appeared in their bodies.

Fangs swell, claws stretch.

The coat turns into wings with the body, and the body is covered in black bristles.

That, it probably didn't take much time.

However, Masayuki had made an incorrect choice.

It was not the case when he was transforming.

A swift attack was the only chance of victory.

Speed enough to exceed Yogiri's thinking speed, that was something only God could do.

Ultimately, the defeat of Masayuki was as good as confirmed at that point of time relative to Yogiri.

Yogiri, he had reflexively responded to the killing intent.

"You, at least let him transform!?" (Tomochika)

Said Tomochika seeing the collapsing form of Masayuki.

Masayuki, his half-baked figure could be said to be that both of human and beast as he collapsed.

"Why should I be full of willingness to wait for this guy?" (Yogiri)

"Well, here, I promised you. But, you didn't negotiate? What to do about the barrier?" (Ryouta)

"I don't want that guy anymore. Hey, Mr Takahashi Ryouta." (Yogiri)

"Oh, yes?" (Ryouta)

Ryouta kept raising his hands, then swiftly shook his head.

You can negotiate with the lords afterwards.

This one is more likely to pass this story through.

Ryouta was supposed to have raised his name.

In other words, he cut down Masayuki at that moment.

“For me, there is no battle strength at all. I think that I can’t speak much if I don’t know when I will be killed.” (Ryouta)

“We are basically only doing that to protect ourselves, so if you do feel like that then don’t worry.” (Yogiri)

“No no. I don’t have it anymore! Anyways, can I retrieve the keys of the barrier? Masayuki has them.” (Ryouta)

Yogiri nodded.

When Ryouta approached Masayuki, he crouched down and felt over his body, taking out a single key.

“Well, I guess you still have zombies or something in the town, but what happens to that?” (Yogiri)

“I don’t care. That was Masayuki carrying the power of the undead in the barrier. So, dead people shouldn’t become zombies anymore..... Well, I’ll do something. There are countermeasures if it is a wild zombie. And, because the barrier has returned to normal, the citizens can come out. If you use a train, I’d like you to wait a bit until I settle down.” (Ryouta)

“If that matter is good, then do you know what that is?” (Yogiri) *(TL: He is referring to the matter where Ryouta wanted them to wait.)*

Because the boss who had caused the incident died, Yogiri and the others didn’t understand what it was.

“Oh, that, don’t get angry? The sage Lain ordered Masayuki to kill you. So, Masayuki is a bit crazy. It came out to such means. I did not want to let such a city become messed up. But, you can’t go against the command of a sage.” (Ryouta)

“Do you not have to execute that order?” (Yogiri)

“I am also a disciple of the sages along with Masayuki, but I have not received any direct orders. So conservation of the city is top-priority.” (Ryouta)

“Eh? Is the sage’s name Sion?” (Tomochika)

Tomochika scratched her head.

She remembered that the sage who came to the bus was named Sion.

“Sion-sama is also a sage, but the jurisdiction is different. This neighborhood is under Lain’s rule. I’m entrusted with this area.” (Ryouta)

“However, summoned to that Sion, what is it like by killing a to-be sage?” (Yogiri)

They seemed to have summoned Yogiri and others to increase the number of sages, so it would be a mistake to kill.

From that point of view, it is reasonable to eliminate Yogiri who had killed a sage.

“I don’t know about that. But, I do not intend to disturb you, and I will let you maximize your conveniences.” (Ryouta)

If you had been show the extinction of the *‘Immortality’* team, you would not feel like plotting.

This should solve the immediate problem.

However, Yogiri had a floating face.

“What happened? Do you still have something?” (Ryouta)

“I thought this was the *‘Immortality’* group, but it seems that it wasn’t. The darkness is getting stronger. I feel it outside of the city.” (Yogiri)

It was what he had felt on the way of coming to this town when he separated from the robot.

As he had gotten closer to the city, it had decreased and was almost not felt when he had arrived at the town, but it is about to reach a dangerous area again.

“Ah, that dangerous aggressor?” (Ryouta)

“If it goes up suddenly and I say it on a forecast basis, it is over 50%.” (Yogiri)

“If it’s a weather forecast, isn’t it supposed to be rainy weather!?” (Tomochika)

Tomochika hurriedly looked around.

“...something... it’s drying up?” (Yogiri)

It was only a sense of incompatibility, but it seemed to only be true if said.

The wind was dry.

Besides, he felt that the air was rough somewhere.

“What is that!?” (Tomochika)

Tomochika scrambled and pointed to the faraway sky.

Looking at the point pointed to, something black and giant shaped like a person rises.

It seems it was slowly approaching the streets.

“...No way... that Aggressor... That one, is that Kurayami?” (Ryouta)

The stunned Ryouta was leaking so.

“Do you know!? Is it not the aggressor robot?” (Tomochika)

“Kurayami is an Aggressor that appeared recently. I heard that Santarou-sama had repulsed... damn. Is this where Lain-sama went to?” (Ryouta)

They heard a scream.

People are rushing into the square in a panic, it is annoying.

Kurayami stepped into the town very easily.

The barrier, it was not as effective on Kurayami.

Kurayami's giant overlaps with a skyscraper that can be seen in the distance.

The building disappeared in a moment.

"Motherfucker! The zombie commotion isn't over yet, and now there's an Aggressor!? What do you want! Where are you running away to!" (Ryouta)

Ryouta makes a complaint as soon as he is able to.

It is that size where the movement seems slow.

But the speed of movement is very fast compared with people, evacuation warnings won't be in time even if we issue them from now.

The shadow of killing intent grew increasingly darker, which conveyed that Kurayami would come to this square.

CHAPTER 36

IN SUCH A SITUATION, I WONDER IF YOU WILL NOT ENJOY MY BODY?!

Lain who had confirmed the death of the *'Immortality'* group through the eyes of Masayuki released the same tone.

Just to be sure, there is an example of a Dominator that was killed even at far distances.

The exercise of power to Masayuki, it can't be said it won't extend to Lain.

"I think that it is dangerous for the master to do it. Even just watching, it can't be said there isn't an effect." (Euphemia)

Euphemia on the side advocated.

She didn't seem to underestimate Yogiri.

"Euphemia. How much do you estimate him as a threat?" (Lain)

"Sage or Sword Saint, mythological creatures and more. I think that Yogiri Takatou shouldn't be involved anymore. Now, he won't be interested in it." (Euphemia)

"In other words, run away? It can't be done." (Lain)

In the system of control by the sage, the sage must be an absolute being.

There must be nothing that threatens their lives, and it's impossible to think that even the possibility exists.

Most sages think so.

And Lain had to act according to that idea.

If she only wanted to confirm whether she will die or not, she could go out there before Yogiri.

But then she would be suspected of rebellion.

It's bad that it seems to be a suicide.

“Although it may be thought that it is absurd... I am wondering if I shouldn’t hold killing intent against Yogiri Takatou as well.” (Lain)

“Surely. There seemed to be such a clause.” (Euphemia)

Among the *‘Immortality’* groups, Lain’s family members are also included.

The power of Yogiri seen through those eyes wasn’t normal.

Yogiri had killed the attacking citizens, but he killed not only those who tried to attack directly, but also those who were aiming with arrows and magic from a distance.

In other words, it responds by perceiving the attack beforehand.

“So how about if you do not aim directly at Yogiri Takatou?” (Lain)

For example, an erratic or stray bullet.

They are not meant to have intent to kill Yogiri.

There are other such possibilities, such as involvement in ranged attacks or using timed bombs.

“But, is it possible to prepare such a mechanism now?” (Euphemia)

“That’s right. If you kill without killing intent, how about such a hand?” (Lain)

Euphemia was surprised at her eyes.

It was because Lain had become two in the blink of an eye.

Spectacular lines where the two of them are indifferent.

It would be impossible for a mirror to be in this place.

“I have the ability to completely regenerate even if I have completely burned this body. It’s no trouble to make another person if you apply it.” (Lain)

“Well, that, I understood it was Goshujin-sama’s great power... but what on earth is it for?” (Euphemia)

“That’s right. That’s what I want to ask about too.” (Lain-B)

Although it can not be distinguished by appearance, what is heard is the Lain who newly appeared.

“What. Let’s call this guy Lain-B. B is my copy, but memories associated with me are quietly missing. I set it so. That is why I don’t hold killing intent towards that person.” (Lain-A)

“Hmm. I do not know the meaning of this, but I guess there is a reason to do this.” (Lain-B)

“You are to stand up in the sky and wait. Attack the city with all of your power according to the signal.” (Lain)

Lain-B floated up into the sky as he was told.

It is as she said.

She doubts if she does not know the reason.

Lain produces replicas one after another, and they all floated into the sky.

The total number exceeded 100.

The spectacle of beautiful women wearing red dresses in the air was a magnificent one.

“Um, although it is said to charge, isn’t it useless with magical attacks and the like.”(Euphemia)

Euphemia has doubts.

She thought it was a fairly slack way.

“Ah. I am not very good with magic. It’s more powerful to thrust as it is.” (Lain)

It is a strategy that took advantage of the characteristics of Lain.

Lain’s mobility speed in air slightly exceeded the speed of sound.

It wouldn't be possible for an ordinary person to cut off the charge.

You can specialize with all your power, then hit the unreasonable power one after another like a vampire.

Even if you do not set your goal, you will only blow up the city in its aftermath.

Lain placed the surviving inhabitants in the city, in positions unnoticed by Yogiri and the others.

Then, she observed.

That is, it was to see the moment when Yogiri released his power on Kurayami.

Scene Change to Yogiri and the Others

While the wind mixed with sand was blowing, people in the city were gathering in the plaza one after another.

Several plazas in the city, they have been dedicated as evacuation places in case of an emergency.

Of course, it is self-evident that it is best to go out of the way of Kurayami who's walking straight.

But, not all of those are able to do it.

Those in the center of the city had no choice but to come here with a feeling of scorching.

"Hey, Takatou-kun. Perhaps... is that something we can do anyway?" (Tomochika)

Tomochika muttered as she stared dazzlingly at Kurayami.

Yogiri and the others, they were still in the center of the square.

"I think I can do it." (Yogiri)

"Oh no. I don't understand why anything like that... can you not!?" (Tomochika)

To Yogiri who had answered briefly, Tomochika snapped at him.

“Truly! Ask! I will listen to anything you ask. So please help me!” (Ryouta)

Ryouta has been saying that while clinging to them.

He seems to be a decent human being for a person related to the sages, it seems he really cares about the city.

“Please do it as soon as possible!” (Ryouta)

“That is true, but I have a bad feeling. Well, it should not be left alone in this state.” (Yogiri)

There is no duty for him to help people, but if the damage of the streets spreads the restoration of the train will be delayed accordingly.

Yogiri saw Kurayami.

It's like a dull, black haze.

Perhaps there is no substance, it's like a mass of extremely minute creatures.

Either way, there are no particular problems if they are unified as individuals.

“Die.” (Yogiri)

Yogiri turned his hand towards Kurayami and released his power.

At the same time, shock hit the entire city.

A line expressing danger immediately spreads around the circumference like a stitch.

“Get down!” (Yogiri)

Yogiri hugged Tomochika, pushing her to the floor to avoid the line.

Ryouta who saw them also squatted onto the floor.

A moment later, something passed over Yogiri, and screams reverberated around them.

It is a voice raised by the survivors.

What they were looking at, broken by the fragments of something, crushed, smashed, was the end of mankind.

“Wh, what? Kurayami is attacking!?” (Ryouta)

“No, Kurayami was killed.” (Yogiri)

Yogiri points to Kurayami.

Kurayami was originally vague-like, but it was now in a more sparse state.

It was scattering.

There was no danger already, it was just diffusing and disappearing.

“Huh? That thing is different!?” (Ryouta)

“So. Yes, there is a clause that has been attacked by letting Kurayami kill.” (Yogiri)

It had penetrated the building, crashed into the earth, and destroyed the whole area with its shockwave.

And then, something flew down from the sky one after another, about to destroy the city.

A mass attack that can be released at an unstoppable speed to the eyes.

But that it isn't aimed at Yogiri is the problem.

“Well, is this also aiming at us?” (Tomochika)

“She is aiming but not targetting. She seems to be trying to capture me. Well, what is being done is refreshing.” (Yogiri)

Yogiri and the others were exposed to carpet-bombing, but they didn't know the identity of the attacker.

Although it is possible to cope with the flying debris, it is indirect and the attack itself has already ended.

“Then, how are you!?” (Tomochika)

“Well, I can deal with the debris, and waiting for the attack to be over is trouble.”
(Yogiri)

“...Uh, it’s all right now so can you let go?” (Tomochika)

“Ah, ‘somewhat soft’, I thought.” (Yogiri)

It was Yogiri who was in his original posture.

“Will you not enjoy my body in such a situation!?” (Tomochika)

“To have hugged you closely as if we are in a Hollywood movie, don’t you want to do it!?” (Yogiri)

Ryouta crawling while lying down cried as if he was 8.

“Because I’m not hugging! It’s a one-sided one!” (Tomochika)

Tomochika who had turned red said it reflexively.

“But, even if I told him to do something, I do not know what’s going on.” (Yogiri)

“Well, it’s a somewhat unbelievable sight, can you listen without making a fool of me?”
(Tomochika)

“What?” (Yogiri)

“A woman in a red dress is falling from the sky.” (Tomochika)

“I can understand it well.” (Yogiri)

Yogiri was most impressed.

Tomochika seemed to have not only static vision acuity, but also dynamic eyesight.

“Is it okay to get up?” (Tomochika)

“For now.” (Yogiri)

The city had been destroyed in various places, but the attacks in the vicinity haven’t been done for a while.

Yogiri got up and released Tomochika.

Tomochika also stood up, pointing to the sky faraway.

“It is coming from over there.” (Tomochika)

“I do not quite understand it.” (Yogiri)

He did not know what the enemy was thinking, but in consequence it was a measure against Yogiri.

If you say you are going to release something, it is possible to kill the person who releases something.

However, as the subject of the attack himself, if they make an attack that can’t be seen he couldn’t do anything.

Nevertheless, that person himself is dead at the end of the attack.

“Damn it! That red dress, I wonder if it’s Lain. What is it! Already! Not worth it!” (Ryouta)

It was said in a blur as if Ryouta couldn’t do it.

Bosses and colleagues aren’t too serious.

“How many Lain’s are there!” (Yogiri)

“Perhaps it’s a separate body! Lain’s ultra regenerative ability makes it even easier for her to duplicate herself!” (Ryouta)

“Well I see. Is there a way to do it?” (Yogiri)

One word of Ryouta was to side with Yogiri.

If the city you personally raised is destroyed by someone, you will want to betray them.

“But there’s no way to identify the other party. If you aim directly at her, it’s easy though.” (Ryouta)

Counterattacks are possible if directly targeted, but the other party would have taken such measures thinking to avoid them.

“Oh, what if we can aim for it?” (Ryouta)

Ryouta had come up with it.

There seemed to be some idea.

No scene change, carry on.

“My class is ‘Mayor’. Although I will omit detailed information, I can see the city overlooking. I was watching the damage situation for a little while but the attack has a pattern. It didn’t attack the same place, and it hasn’t attacked in the vicinity continuously.” (Ryouta)

It seemed to have been unconscious.

Even if people try to do something to get rid of it, regularity will still be created.

“I see. It is possible to narrow down the next attack point to some extent with that. But, if you understand it won’t make it in time.” (Yogiri)

“It’s okay. I am able to move in the moment if it is a public place in the city I manage. Several people can move together.” (Ryouta)

“Is that so! But, then Ryouta could have run away anytime.” (Yogiri)

Going to the edge of the city, you just escape.

That alone will escape from this crisis.

“Can you just get out of this city and escape alone?” (Yogiri)

“It’s a sage, but this guy’s amazing!” (Ryouta)

We decided to execute the plan at once.

We moved away from the point of attack with Ryouta’s power to an area not yet attacked.

That was a residential area.

People are wondering or not if evacuation has already been completed.

Yogiri and Tomochika joined hands, standing side by side.

Ryouta has metastasized to another place just in case.

He was supposed to take them back to another place just incase the sage disappeared.

“I don’t think I need to go out with Dannoura-san. I can manage to do it if I am alone.”
(Yogiri)

“Because I can see you, the probability of success will rise.” (Tomochika)

[I also have sensing capabilities.](Mokomoko)

Attacks are being done in intervals of several seconds to tens of seconds.

There should be some signs at once.

Tomochika was staring at the sky, when she gripped the hand of Yogiri tightly.

It’s a sign.

Tomochika moves, and Yogiri follows her.

The two rushed forwards. While running, Yogiri felt something immediately behind them and ran there.

Pitch black, into the shadow of killing intent.

They rushed into an absolute dead ground.

Towards something flying, Yogiri instantly gained power.

“Mokomoko-san!” (Tomochika)

[Oh!](Mokomoko)

From the uniform of Tomochika, something slipped out completely.

It spreads into a dome shape in a moment and covered them.

A huge crash sounded right after, the dome shook, and silence arrived.

“Ah, I did not want to do it by a blow. It was bad for my heart!” (Tomochika)

[Yes. I thought it was robust to a certain extent, but I didn’t know what to try it on.]

Even if you killed Lain who was assaulting them, the dead body thrusts as it is.

(TL: If you are confused, I think a copy of Lain slammed into the shield.)

What had protected Yogiri and the others, it was the substance obtained from the giant robot Aggressor.

It seems like an artificial muscle that was used inside a robot.

They heard it was fragile compared to the exterior of the robot, but it seemed possible to make the human body fly at supersonic speed.

[But, is it okay if I only knocked down one?](Mokomoko)

Mokomoko wondered about this doubt.

The enemies would introduce as many copies as possible after all.

“There was a response so it’s okay.” (Yogiri)

But, Yogiri had answered smoothly.

Even if they waited for a while, the next attack wouldn’t come.

It seems Yogiri’s power had reached the enemy.

CHAPTER 37

IT LOOKS LIKE I'M CHEERING WITH GLEE ALONE!

As all the Lain Bs who were waiting in the air lost their power, Lain watched them crash.

She doesn't know exactly what happened.

Lain was not in sync with the Lain Bs.

However, she knew Yogiri had directed the power of instantaneous death to the Lain Bs.

Otherwise, it was impossible for an immortal vampire to die.

Slamming into the sand-covered ground, the ugly crushed Lain Bs quickly disappeared.

It is because it's designed to remove unnecessary parts.

"Ah, that, this is one..." (Euphemia)

Looking at the picture of hell that is the people falling down, she hears Euphemia's fear.

"It seems Lain B was done in. Because they are duplicates made from the same template settings, it seems if one is done in they all are done in." (Lain)

"You shouldn't take hands against Yogiri Takatou!" (Euphemia)

"Really? Next time it will only be to make duplicates with settings that vary a little. That way, once one is done the others won't be as well." (Lain)

Even if Lain B actually dies, Lain won't be affected.

Yogiri's power seems to have limitations as well.

Even regarding reaction to the killing intent, subtly there are differences depending on the situation.

Perhaps there may be a key to capturing Yogiri.

It was likely a breakthrough method could be found if they investigated a little further.

However, Lain who felt the response was disappointed.

After all, Yogiri could not kill an invulnerable Original Blood vampire. ¹

—Then there isn't anymore use. ²

Lain lost interest in Yogiri.

Although it is a rebellion against the sages, there is no way that only Lain needs to respond.

If they couldn't overlook it, then only the sages who thought so should get rid of him.

—You seem to have killed Kurayami. Even if he was kept alive, there may be a way to use him.

Being able to beat the Aggressor is highly useful.

She wished she could have declared that it was a sage.

That way, him murdering the sages would be unquestionable.

But it is afterwards to think about it.

Now that Kurayami has disappeared, there is no use being in this place.

Lain tried to return, then she noticed the abnormality.

Euphemia has not moved too much since then.

As if she froze, she didn't even tremble.

And, Lain noticed she too was the same as she couldn't move.

—What happened!?

Lain was puzzled by the unexpected phenomenon.

She felt such surprise, comparable to when she first came to this world.

It even seems as if time is stopped for a few hours.

Due to this phenomenon, she was led to think about the possibility that was hard to

believe.

Her body was dead.

Now, Lain who was in this place, she was also a duplicate made by her body like Lain B.

However it wasn't an instant presence like Lain B, she was linking to the main body to share memory.

This is the identity of immortality.

The body exists in a safe place, then activates duplication.

No matter how much the duplicate was broken, it was only to create the next copy instantly.

However, the important link had been broken.

It becomes impossible to contact the main body, and the latest state wouldn't be reflected.

Therefore, Lain who is in this place is continuing to think independently.

However, she won't for very long.

Lain in this place, she is designed on the premise that she is linked to the main body.

If the link is broken, her body will become unnecessary and will disappear.

That was inevitable as the duplicate is a dependant existence.

Lain is like an after-image.

Never to be conscious of anything, a temporary existence that only appears between synchronizations.

Whether it is like a running light phenomenon, Lain thought about prolonging this moment.

—Have you reached the main body from Lain B?

Lain was admired, she was also relieved.

Lain B and the main body are not directly connected.

Yet Yogiri Takatou, he could kill the main body that existed in another dimension.
She didn't know the reason for doing so. It's too unreasonable, and powerful enough to be stupid.

But, that was it.

That alone could save that child.

Just before she faded away, Lain was full of hope.

Scene change to Yogiri and others

The next day after the series of incidents.

Yogiri and friends were in the central square.

A lot of tents for victims were prepared in the space of the plaza, and Yogiri and others stayed there.

The zombie commotion, Kurayami's raid.

And massive destruction by the sages.

He didn't know where to lend a hand, and he seemed to be despised, but Ryouta immediately responded.

To grasp the situation of damage, support was requested from the neighboring cities.

He rescued the victims, gathered the necessary supplies, and offered accommodation to those who were burnt out.

"I've woken up, is everything okay?" (Yogiri)

"I'm still sleepy but I'm managing somehow." (Tomochika)

Yogiri and others headed for the building prepared as a disaster countermeasure office.

Going inside, they go to Ryouta, chief of the countermeasure head.

"No, really, thank you. Yesterday was saved!" (Ryouta)

Although he hadn't been sleeping and had a tired face, Ryouta greeted them with a full smile.

It seemed to be true that he appreciated it.

"That, even though you said thank you, sage? Even though we beat it..." (Tomochika)

Tomochika is put back into confusion.

Because Ryouta is a follower of the sages, he guessed she thought he wasn't happy.

"You don't have to give respect or pay tribute to a human bomb like him." (Ryouta)

Ryouta was opening up.

"But, the city was safe because there is a barrier of the sages, right? Is that all right?" (Tomochika)

"Of course, a new sage will be put in charge. Until then it is a shame even making walls. Well, maybe for something. I was saying to do anything you can in this situation. There may be times when I have to wait a bit." (Ryouta)

"Yes. I'm thinking of leaving the city as soon as possible." (Yogiri)

As to why Yogiri had been sleeping in the morning was woken up, that was the cause.

Tomochika had strongly appealed that he should leave this town soon.

Tomochika is worried about Yogiri killing civilians.

It was just in her own head if from Yogiri, but it would be mixed feelings if from the surviving citizens.

Some might think about getting revenge as well.

"That's fine, but the train won't move yet?" (Ryouta)

"That's it, but can I get a truck from the square?" (Yogiri)

“The Immortality Organization’s? Well surely you will be able to reach the kingdom, is this okay with you?” (Ryouta)

“Yes. How does that fuel go? Does this world have gasoline?” (Yogiri)

“The cars in this world are running off of magical power. Because it uses a magic stone shape, you do not need to use magic separately. All right. Please wait a moment. I’ll do it before departure.” (Ryouta)

That was the case.

Yogiri and others still

Morning of the next day.

When Tomochika arrived at the truck, a lot of goods were being brought in.

The truck was rugged-like, and it had 6 tires.

It was developed in this world as a military armored car model.

“Is this okay? Even though the city is in such a situation...” (Tomochika)

Tomochika spoke with a sorry feeling to Ryouta, who is commanding the transportation work.

“No it’s fine. If it wasn’t for you, the damage of the city should have been over such a degree.” (Ryouta)

“If we hadn’t come, there might not have been such a thing.” (Tomochika)

“Well, that is unavoidable to say. Originally there is no big reason for the sage to do it, I don’t understand if you were the cause. The Aggressor may have attacked it regardless of the sage.” (Ryouta)

Yogiri was convinced that it was such a thing.

“Okay, the loading has ended. I prepared what you needed. I had enough room for magic stones, so it would be enough for the kingdom.” (Ryouta)

Ryouta supplied goods, then described the basic matters of the truck.

Because Yogiri had gotten into the truck quickly, Tomochika is the one listening to it.

“Thank you for everything.” (Tomochika)

“Well then, be careful not to fall off of the cliffs.” (Ryouta)

Ryouta stuck his hand out.

They shook hands and they parted.

Tomochika also boards the truck.

Yogiri was already sitting in the front passenger seat, and he was playing a mobile game.

“Well, aren’t you driving!? I was saying good-bye to Maoro-Kart!³” (Tomochika)

Tomochika, she believed driving is a thing a man does.

“I’m not good at it. I just said there was something I did. I always hit the wall with a curve, can I really drive such a guy?” (Yogiri)

“I think you can step on the break!?” (Tomochika)

She couldn’t let Yogiri drive.

She got over next to Yogiri, sitting down in the driver’s seat.

“But I’ve also never touched the real thing, I wonder if it will be alright.” (Tomochika)

[What, I’m going to be taking a big boat as I am teaching my Dannoura-style driving technique.](Mokomoko)

“Why won’t you stop being cheap and putting Dannoura on everything!?” (Tomochika)

By the way, there was a technique called ‘Dannoura-type Flying Body Press’, it was her sister’s good skill.

[Whether it is a tank or a helicopter, I am familiar with driving methods! I won’t experience Dannoura!] (Mokomoko)

“My home, what on earth are you going to do...” (Tomochika)

Because she seemed to notice a terrible possibility, she gave up on thinking on the way. Mokomoko also started the engine according to this instruction.

Whether magic worked internally, the operation system and instruments seemed to be the same as generic cars.

As she stepped on the accelerator, the truck slowly started moving.

“Well, departure!” (Tomochika)

Tomochika raised one hand and cheers vigorously.

“...where is your reaction!? It looks like I’m cheering with glee alone!” (Tomochika)

“Work hard.” (Yogiri)

Yogiri said with an eye on the game machine.

“Yes, yes, I will do my best!” (Tomochika)

First we head for the canyon.

I aimed for it as it was the Kingdom of the future.

INTERLUDE

THE FACT YOU ARE SEEING THIS IMAGE

The girl was lying down and staring at the ceiling.
How long she had been doing this, she didn't really know.
She noticed she was in this state, and thought she was sleeping.
She had been thinking for a while, but did not clearly remember the memory even if it passed.

There was no choice, so she raised herself.
She noticed that she was in a coffin.
It was a luxurious substitute that used satin fabric for the lining.
The coffin was very large compared to her body.

"As if like a vampire." (???)

The girl was surprised at her voice.
It was a young voice, higher than what she expected.
Trying to touch the body, she noticed she was squeezing something in her hand.
It was a round stone she had, but she didn't know as to why she had such a thing.
PetaPeta, she touched her face and body.
It couldn't be said that she was in the shape of an adult.

Clothes were a pink dress with frills.
'I see, I am like a child.' is what she thought.
While she was thinking about such things, the inside of the room was slowly getting brighter.
It was filled with pretty furniture and stuffed animals, like a girl's room.
Among them, only the existence of a coffin was heterogeneous.
When it was sufficiently bright, a woman in a red dress appeared.

[The fact that you are seeing this image, that means my prospect was successful. I died, you survived.](Red-Dress-Woman)

As a person appeared, the girl was relieved.

She had indeed thought she would be in trouble as it was.

[Let me explain, starting with your identity. You are me.](Red-Dress-Woman)

The girl inclined her head.

She didn't really understand the meaning.

Then, the woman's explanation continued as if to answer that question.

[My name is Tendo Lain. My existence is known as a sage in this world.] (Lain)

The girl knew what this world and sage meant.

She didn't know who she was, but she seemed to have such knowledge.

[And, you are a duplicate made from me. Because I prioritized becoming the most separate individual, you did not inherit any memory related to my personality at all.] (Lain)

Although it was said to be duplication, without memory replication, it seemed to be quite different from the figure.

[It's a measure to make that figure separate. It's too bad for you but I ran it as my hobby. It's the form I once wanted to be. Everything I did was said as irritating, but I have never been called cute. Since I was a child, although I have a poor eye, I killed some people and it seemed to be strange.¹] (Lain)

As she told herself she was wondering what type of person she was facing, she decided to postpone it.

The image may not be reproduced.

It was necessary to listen firmly.

[Why did you take such a roundabout way to avoid the attack of Takatou Yogiri?]
(Lain)

Takatou Yogiri.

As soon as she heard that name, the girl's heart beat faster.

She knew that power of his.

Then, she roughly understood why Lain did this.

[I will tell you about where you are next. This is my hideout on the ground. This room and casket were mine, but now are yours. There are enough assets, so you can live as you like. You and I are completely different, I cannot force you to do anything.] (Lain)

Even if she was told that, the girl had no choice but to be at a loss.

She was created, she had no memories of the past.

She could not understand why it is nice even if she is told to live like that in such a state.

[Well, now that you understand the story up to this point, you have anything to ask?]
(Lain)

That wasn't an order, it would be to make Lain's intention not to substitute for her.

She was afraid of Yogiri's power.

Lain soon talked about her request.

"What's that, unfair!" (Small-Lain)

She had thought so.

The girl who had just awakened has no purpose of living or a goal, she doesn't know the standard to judge good or bad.

If you asked her such a thing, there was nothing better to do.

"Well, as a matter of a fact, I will go see Yogiri-san." (Small-Lain)

To her, there were passionate thoughts for Takatou Yogiri.²
It is only one of the measures in order to avoid the power of Yogiri.
But, for her who knew nothing else, that feeling was very important.
Or it might also be a calculation by Lain.
However, she didn't care.
Her feelings for Takatou Yogiri.
Only that, was shining within her.

Scene change to classmates

The blade that entered between the shoulder and mouth, it tore out of the flank.
A humanoid-shaped monster, it was obliquely cut apart at an angle.
While spreading blood and organs, the monster collapses and stops breathing.
The scattering of Sugusama Soru began, and the long-haired girl who knocked down the monster, Ninomiya Ryoko absorbed most of it.
Although the other party members will form to participate in the irritation, the amount is insignificant.

“Ryoko, come~on. Now, I'm not earning the most experience.” (Asuha)

It is Koriyama Asuha that says so.
It is a girl who is a beauty-coordinator.
This is in the middle of the Primeval Forest.
The ones fighting, while raising their levels while aiming for the Imperial City, were Yogiri's classmates.
They had a party of 4 people, it was to raise their levels.
Their strategy was simple.

Give the 'Skill: Up-Charm' to Ryoko, the strongest among the party members.
Then the charmed monsters appear one after another, so she cuts one down.
By doing this, people other than Ryoko can raise their levels relatively safely.

The experience value, the amount absorbed into the soul is proportional to the distance.

The level of Ryoko who fought at the front was the most prominent.

“Let’s finish for today. It’s almost time for the ‘Up-Charm’ to expire.” (Ryoko)

Ryoko shakes her sword lightly.

Blood and grease scatters cleanly just by that.

It is not just the sword.

Ryoko boasts overwhelming strength, of course it was her skill, but the weapon’s performance was also a large part of it.

“Yeah. If we continue like this it will soon be night. Is that okay for everyone?” (Asuha)

Asuha confirmed with the rest of the two.

Those who weren’t fighting couldn’t oppose it, and the party came back to their camp.

There are many tents set up in the open space of the Primeval Forest.

Most of the classmates were here.

The party broke up when they returned to camp, and Ryoko went to her tent.

“Hello! Ryoko!” (???)

There was a previous guest.

However, this was a tent for one which was given to the high level people.

It was a violation of the rules to enter arbitrarily.

“Can you please not enter arbitrarily?” (Ryoko)

It was a girl with blonde hair and blue eyes, she didn’t look Japanese in any way.

Kyaroru S. Ren.

As you could see from her name, she was a foreigner.

When she could enroll in highschool she came to Japan, and she had been in the same

class as Ryoko for 2 consecutive years.

She had a smartphone in her hand, as she was touching this and that.

It should have been lost a while ago, it was Ryoko's smartphone.

"That, I'm sorry. Even though I picked it up, I was rude." (Ren)

Ryoko calmed down quickly.

She thought she had entered the tent without permission, but it was to bring her the smartphone out of kindness.

Yet now the attitude was disappointing.

"*Maa Maa*, Kinishinidekudasai."⁴ (Ren)

"Can you please stop talking about me? I'm going to go in just a minute." (Ryoko)

"Is that so? Well I will stop it then." (Ren)

Kyaroru was able to speak Japanese very naturally. Her prattle is her joke material usage.

"This, where had it fallen?" (Ryoko)

"Ah, I picked it up, but I only took it in secrecy! Yes, here you are." (Ren)

She passed the smartphone with a smile, Ryoko was stunned.

"So, I came to return it because the batteries seemed to have run out." (Ren)

She checked her smartphone.

The battery level was below 5%.

"What do you mean?" (Ryoko)

She didn't understand her intention.

The smartphone was not useful for anything in the different world, and there was no choice but to steal it.

"This, I wanted to look at the monitoring tool which was trial and error. It is impossible, the battery ran out as is, and I couldn't do anything so I came back. Hey, can you show me where it is moving?" (Ren)

Monitoring tool.

It was a special application installed on this smartphone, and those who knew that it existed should be limited.

"...You, who are you?" (Ryoko)

"Takatou-kun's stalker. The same as you." (Ren)

The monitoring of Takatou Yogiri by foreign forces.

It was likely to be enough.

It was natural you would not be able to take your eyes off while knowing about Yogiri's existence.

"Well, whatever you want. Since I came to another world, there is no point in watching Takatou-kun." (Ryoko)

That was Ryoko's true intention.

If she couldn't return to Japan anymore, there is no meaning to the monitoring mission.

It is the highest priority to act in order for her and her classmates to survive now.

"Yeah, I understand Ryoko's idea. Would you mind moving the monitoring tool? You don't need to keep it confidential, right?" (Ren)

"If you were also monitoring Takatou-kun, don't you have something similar?" (Ryoko)

“We also prepared some Takatou-kun dedicated satellites, and I was always watching them. It doesn’t make sense if you come here. But, Japan was originally involved in Takatou-kun, if it is occult-related technology, what is the length of a day in Japan? It’s there.” (Ren)

Ryoko manipulated the smartphone.

She thought it would be nice if she wanted to see so much.

Starting the monitoring tool and entering a passcode.

Then, the state of Yogiri was displayed.

She didn’t know the position because there is no GPS, but the rough direction and distance are displayed.

According to it, Yogiri was in the direction of the kingdom.

In other words, he was ahead of Ryoko.

“After all, he is alive.”

“But, Takatou-kun is in a sealed state... something like that... the first gate is open...”
(Ren)

She was chilly.

Ryoko hadn’t seen the threat directly, but she heard the tragedy caused by that power is disgusting.

“There is nothing strange separately? I’m sealing it myself, so you can remove it yourself. Yes, thank you.” (Ren)

‘Well, that’s it for now.’ she said.

Ren tried to leave the tent.

“Kyaroru. What are you planning to do?” (Ryoko)

Ryoko called to Kyaroru’s back.

“Apart from that for now. Do you not see them as soon as you go?” (Ren)

“I am afraid... aren’t you?” (Ryoko)

Even though Japan was paying close attention, at that time death was a story of a distant world somewhere.

However, now that the seal had broken, the danger was imminent.

“Scared? Oh, I guess my way of thinking is different from that. Do you think that Takatou-kun is a monster?” (Ren)

“Is it different?” (Ryoko)

Just thinking and killing people.

That would be a ridiculous monster.

She could not feel secure or anything whether it was sealed or not, and when she was in Japan, Ryoko had a feeling like sitting on a needle.

“I think so. I wish I could think very simply. The existence which governs the death of all living things. What is that?” (Ren)

“No way...” (Ryoko)

Too simple, that was the answer Ryoko had imagined suddenly.

“We knew it existed in reality and were shaken, as a result, we had to abandon our faith. Well, that kind of thing.” (Ren)

Kyaroru said that and went out.

The new faith, it wouldn’t change even if you come to a different world.

To Ryoko who had been swept away by the whole situation, her unwaveringness seemed a little enviable.



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